Models of Desire in Graeco-Arabic Philosophy

# Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition

*Edited by*

Robert M. Berchman (*Foro di Studi Avanzati Gaetano Massa, Roma*)
John F. Finamore (*University of Iowa*)

*Editorial Board*

John Dillon (*Trinity College, Dublin*) – Gary Gurtler (*Boston College*)
Jean-Marc Narbonne (*Laval University, Canada*)

VOLUME 27

The titles published in this series are listed at *brill.com/spnp*

# Models of Desire in Graeco-Arabic Philosophy

*From Plotinus to Ibn Ṭufayl*

*By*

Bethany Somma

BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 786762).

The Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available online at http://catalog.loc.gov
LC record available at http://lccn.loc.gov/2021004802

Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: "Brill". See and download: brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 1871-188X
ISBN 978-90-04-46083-6 (hardback)
ISBN 978-90-04-46084-3 (e-book)

Copyright 2021 by Bethany Somma. Published by Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands.
Koninklijke Brill NV incorporates the imprints Brill, Brill Hes & De Graaf, Brill Nijhoff, Brill Rodopi, Brill Sense, Hotei Publishing, mentis Verlag, Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh and Wilhelm Fink Verlag.
Koninklijke Brill NV reserves the right to protect this publication against unauthorized use. Requests for re-use and/or translations must be addressed to Koninklijke Brill NV via brill.com or copyright.com.

This book is printed on acid-free paper and produced in a sustainable manner.

*For Tom for everything*

*al-Ḥakīm* said: *“The first desired is last attained, and the first attained is last desired.”*

Prooemium, *Theologia Aristotelis*

∴

# Contents

**Acknowledgements** IX
**Abbreviations** XI

**Introduction: Desire and Its Models** 1
1 Methodology 2
2 The Two Models and the Human Goal 11
3 Structure and Scope 15

**1 An Inherent Model of Desire: Plotinus on Desire for the Good** 20
1 Terminology of Desire 21
2 Desire in the General Structure of Reality 26
3 Desire in Intellect 29
4 Desire in Soul 35
5 Desire in Judgments and Action 40
6 What Does It Mean to Desire the Good? 45
7 Being Good-Like 50
8 Becoming like the Good 54
9 Formless Desire 57

**2 The *Plotiniana Arabica* and Desire's Discontents** 69
1 Desire in Intellect 70
2 Soul's Desire of Intellect 77
3 Soul and Body's Desire 82
4 Assimilation and the Ethical Implications of Soul's Procession 87
5 Virtue and the Return 92
6 Avicenna on the *Theology of Aristotle* 99

**3 Aristotle and al-Fārābī on Desire** 110
1 Aristotle on Desire 110
2 Al-Fārābī on Desire 125
3 Al-Fārābī on Aristotle on Desire 131
4 Models of Desire in Aristotle and al-Fārābī 139

**4 Ibn Bāǧǧa on Desire and Conceptualization** 144
1 Desire in the Soul 146
2 Desire in the Human Being 153
3 Striving Soul and the Body 161

4 Ibn Bāğğa on al-Ġazalī and the Sufis 168
5 Human Excellence and Desire 173

**5 Ibn Ṭufayl: Situating *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān*** 183
1 The Purpose and Methodology of the Text 185
2 Ibn Ṭufayl on His Influences 188
3 Origins and Orientation 195

**6 The Desire Inherent to Ibn Ṭufayl's Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān** 203
1 Ḥayy's Desire 204
2 Ibn Ṭufayl's Interpretation of Avicenna and al-Ġazālī on Desire 215
3 Appetite and Dissection 223
4 Holistic Goal of Ḥayy's Education 229
5 Subject of Education, Subject of Desire 235

**Conclusion: Modelling the Study** 245
1 Drawing the Boundaries of the Book 249
2 Ibn Bāğğa and Ibn Ṭufayl: Modelling Good Desire 253

**Bibliography** 257
**Index** 268

# Acknowledgements

The project laid out in the following pages benefitted from a diverse community. This community spanned an ocean, both preparing the way for and helping the development of the basic thought of this project from germination to full fruition. This book is the final form of my dissertation project, which I was fortunate enough to complete with the support of two universities. It began while I was a PhD student and teaching assistant at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, and came to fulfillment during my time as a research fellow at the Munich School of Ancient Philosophy at the LMU in Munich. Most of all, I want to thank Peter Adamson for his guidance, patience, and support through the years, first during my time as a doctoral student at MUSAPh and now as postdoc with his ERC project, Animals in Philosophy of the Islamic World. I am grateful for his attention, trust, and overall good humor, all of which made the completion of this book less taxing. I would also like to thank Thérèse Bonin, who was part of my PhD committee, for her valuable advice and thorough feedback as I began working on this study in book form. I also owe thanks to the other members of the PhD committee, Michael Harrington and Christof Rapp, whose questions and feedback helped this book become what it is.

I gained many skills from both of the universities at which I studied, skills that I employed in this book and that have made this project possible. I learned much from the members of both departments, who navigated the history of philosophy with attentive care and intellectual adroitness, and who probed specific questions with learned assiduity and linguistic fluency. In particular, I would like to thank Matteo Di Giovanni, Rotraud Hansberger, Patrick Lee Miller, Ron Polansky, Daniel Selcer, and George Yancy. Additionally, I want to thank Mark Anderson, who first introduced me to Plotinus, and who encouraged me to continue striving to understand his thought.

I have had the opportunity to share various aspects of this study at several conferences and workshops over the years, where the feedback from attendees helped to shape the work into its current state. I especially thank George Karamanolis at the University of Vienna, Filip Karfik and his team at the University of Fribourg, as well as the members of the Institute for Jewish Philosophy and Religion at the University of Hamburg, for their perspectives and for the chance to share parts of my work with them.

I would like to thank Robert Berchman and John Finamore for including this study as part of their series. Additionally, I would like to express my gratitude to an anonymous referee, whose perceptive feedback opened the way for a new

depth to the project. The book is certainly the better for it, and I am grateful for the attention they afforded my text.

It has also been my great pleasure to have many wonderful colleagues over the years who, in various ways, both aided in the production of this book and helped me grow as a scholar. In particular, I would like to thank Tommaso Alpina, Hanif Amin Beidokhi, Fedor Benevich, Jacob Greenstine, Jonathan Greig, Máté Herner, Martin Krahn, Andreas Lammer, Abdurrahman Mihirig, Marilù Papandreou, Melina Vogiatzi, and Kelsey Ward.

Finally, I would like to thank my non-academic friends and family, who have given my life balance. I owe a debt of gratitude to the members of the campaigns that kept me grounded over the last several years, whose reminder that we are never done with our stories offered valuable perspective. I also want to express my appreciation to my siblings for their inspiration, support, and patience as I saw this investigation through. I especially want to thank my twin, who has lived with me and my fastidious, but frequently annoying, inquisitiveness the longest, and has thus had to muster the most fortitude. Without her, this book, as I, would be incomplete. And most of all, I express my utmost gratitude and love to my spouse, Tom, who has provided endless support, unwavering patience, and unfailingly insightful words throughout the course of this project, and to Aias, who has given guidance and support from the beginning without any words at all.

# Abbreviations

## Aristotle

| | |
|---|---|
| *APo.* | *Analytica Posteriora* (*Posterior Analytics*) |
| *DA* | *De Anima* (*On the Soul*) |
| *EE* | *Ethica Eudemia* (*Eudemian Ethics*) |
| *EN* | *Ethica Nicomachea* (*Nicomachean Ethics*) |
| *GC* | *De Generatione et Corruptione* (*On Generation and Corruption*) |
| *HA* | *Historia Animalium* (*History of Animals*) |
| *MA* | *De Motu Animalium* (*On the Movement of Animals*) |
| *Met.* | *Metaphysica* (*Metaphysics*) |
| *Phys.* | *Physica* (*Physics*) |

## Plotinus

| | |
|---|---|
| *DS* | *Epistle on Divine Science* |
| *Enn.* | *Enneads* |
| *GS* | *Sayings of the Greek Sage* |
| *ThA* | *Theology of Aristotle* |

INTRODUCTION

# Desire and Its Models

Human beings have many desires. We desire to act, to know, to taste, to achieve our ends. As a result of the abundance of desires, we also constantly navigate, calculate, and moderate the desires springing up within and without us. We are, to put it metaphorically, desiring machines. Although the intensity of desire varies from person to person, the claim that human beings desire on a regular basis is not, I take it, particularly controversial. But *why* we desire—and in what way the fact of our desiring relates to who we really are—is a different story. Habit, education, demeanor, and external circumstances all, to some extent, construct the margins within which our desire manifests and plays out. Yet, there is a still deeper aspect of our desiring, one that is more foundational than its manifestations. That is the fact that desire is built into who we are as human subjects. One might wonder—is desire the *most* fundamental part of us as human subjects? Such that, to be human is simply to be desiring all the time? Or is desire only one part of who we are, something that might or must happen at times, but that is surely not *always* happening, in the end superseded by other activities? These questions, and the two accounts of desire within the human being they implicitly divulge, are intimately related to ethical action and human perfection. This book treats the specifics of desire according to these two accounts and their relation to the human goal. For, through the juxtaposition of these models from within the Aristotelian tradition, we discover a basic distinction that has far-reaching ramifications for human experience, perfection, and the nature of the good.

This study aims to confront the problem of desire's role in the constitution of the subject on multiple registers. On the one hand, there is the historical register that provides the main investigative framework of this study. On this register the study addresses the particular philosophical concerns of late ancient and medieval Aristotelianism regarding the extent to which desire is essential to the human being and in what ways it is active therein. On the other hand, there is another register, often latent, that accommodates the human experience of desiring and what this desire means for reaching the full human potential. On this register the study addresses the universal, human concern about what it means to be a desiring creature, specifically, in what way one can experience desire for the ineffable or for something that is, properly speaking, inconceivable. Central to both of these approaches is the question of the extent to which desire operates within and is essential to the human being.

Ancient and medieval thinkers worked to account for desire primarily on two fronts. One involved understanding the role of desire within human psychology. The other, perhaps main, front involved acknowledging the role of desire in ethics, namely, the role that desires and motivations play in education, ethical action, and living well. In ancient Greek philosophy, we find these concerns in Plato's tripartite division of the soul and the corresponding desires of each, in the Stoic aim of desiring only what is up to us, and in Plotinus's attribution of desire to every level of being. These positions inspire and direct the thought of thinkers in the late ancient world such as Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa, and Pseudo-Dionysius. One might trace this discussion into any one of the three successive recipients of ancient thought: the Byzantine East, the Latin West, or the Islamic World. In this book, we will follow the third trail, and, after an examination of Plotinus's own thought, start with an investigation of the Aristotelianizing of Plotinus's account of desire in the adaptation of his work from 9th century Baghdad. From there, we will consider Aristotle's own presentation of desire and its object in his *DA*, including as transmitted in an Arabic paraphrase and two Arabic translations, before looking to al-Fārābī, Ibn Bāǧǧa, and Ibn Ṭufayl. We will find competing ways of discussing desire emerging in this tradition, partially due to a sustained effort to unify a psychological account of desire's function with ethical consideration of desire's role in human perfection, and partially due to an ambiguity in the Aristotelian psychological account with which they worked. The different accounts of desire allow for radically divergent conceptions of the relation of substances to the truth and the corresponding placement of desire within desiring subjects.

## 1 Methodology

The basic methodological premise of this book is that there are two ways of interpreting desire within the human being that yield two different models of desire. In turn, there are two correlative types of desire one might attribute to human beings. I call these two models and types of desire inherent and non-inherent. On an inherent model of desire, the desire in question is the activity of the desiring subject (whatever that may be). Insofar as the desiring subject is the sort of thing that it is, it will have this desire as part and parcel of whatever else it is or does. Thus, this inherent desire is essential to the desiring subject: it is a basic part of what the subject is. This desire is also fundamentally related to what it desires from the beginning: it is either a generic sort of desire, i.e. for pleasure or honor, or a specific desire for an object that is unique in kind. Further, the desire of its object does not cease, regardless of whether it is satisfied

to any extent, since desiring is what the subject does. Thus, inherent desire is in some way necessary, at least once it has been activated—once the activity of desiring has begun. (More on this actualization below.) Although the desiring subject might have to work with other capacities to refine its own *understanding* of what it desires and to bring its object more clearly into view, the desiring of the object or type of object will already be guaranteed. On a non-inherent model of desire, by contrast, the desire in question comes about through a combination of the capacity to desire and something else—a judgment about what is good, a concept formed in the mind, an imagination of a smell, etc. Thus, this sort of desire is contingent, insofar as any discrete act of desire that occurs within the subject must be aided by something outside of the desiring power. That is, even if the desiring power within the soul intrinsically desires (that being its activity), on this model this desire is universal, while the actual occurrences of desire on the non-inherent model are discrete and for specific objects. In turn, while it might be necessary that the power desires, there is no guarantee that the desiring subject will desire any one thing in particular, its objects being whatever the subject happens to come upon. This is not to say that the subject will not have certain sorts of desires that are determined by its nature *in kind*—for example, by whatever a being of that sort might find valuable. It is only to say that none of those desires will be determined by the desiring power itself, but instead all discrete acts of desiring will have distinct principles that determine what it desires.

It is important to highlight from the beginning that when I refer to an inherent or non-inherent desire, I refer to the *activity* of desiring, not to the power or capacity to desire. Ultimately, every account of desire needs to have a source or principle of desiring that can account for the very occurrence of desire in the first place. But the fact of a power essentially being the potential to desire is not the same as a desire that *itself* inheres in the subject (power, soul, essence) that desires. It is easy to conflate these two ways of identifying inherence. To avoid doing so (to the extent possible), I will restrict myself throughout this book to using "inherent" only in reference to the actual desire that fits the criteria given above.

Let me offer a general example, before moving on to one that is more specific to this book. Consider Aias the rescue dog. Aias has a dog essence, and in terms of this essence he does certain activities. One of these activities is Aias's desire to be a good boy. There are two ways one might understand this desire, as it relates to Aias's essence. Specifically, this desire could be what it is for Aias to be a dog—insofar as Aias lives, he desires to be a good boy as the essential aspect of who he is. Sure, Aias might desire other things as well, but to be a good boy is the desire that defines him insofar as he is a dog. On this under-

standing, Aias's desire to be a good boy is an inherent desire, a desire he will always have in virtue of being a dog. On another understanding, Aias's desire to be a good boy is just one of many possible desires, such that discrete desires are not inherent to him. Just as Aias desires to be a good boy, he also desires many other things, such as eating turkey, playing fetch, doing zoomies,[1] barking, and receiving ear scratches. Perhaps Aias will not desire to be a good boy at all, or at least not all the time. All of these desires may be specific instances of a generic desire for pleasure on the part of the dog, but, on this account, it would be wrong to say that any one of these activities is somehow more (or solely) essential to Aias over another.

Notice that even in the case of Aias the rescue dog, each of these models captures a rather different conception of doghood. On the non-inherent account, dogs do all sorts of things, and we can list the sorts of things dogs like and want to do. None of these things is unique to doghood: dogs just have stuff they like to do, stuff they don't. None of these desires is inherently permanent. On the inherent account, Aias's desire to be a good boy is unique, and it really captures Aias's doghood, since it is his deepest desire. Since desiring to be a good dog is definitional of doghood, Aias will always want to be a good dog, whether or not he is achieving this goal. It is not clear, on either account, what desiring to be a good boy amounts to—but it is a distinct desire nonetheless.

There is something relatable about the inherent model. Consider the well-known online videos of inspiring stories about dogs who, having found themselves in bad situations, are rescued and given another chance at life. A frequent refrain in such stories is the resilience shown by dogs who, having endured something terrible (abandonment, neglect, abuse), are driven by a desire to be happy and to connect with someone else. In other words, all the dog wants is to be a *dog*—to be, let's say, a good boy, as I have been calling it. Even if the dog has to learn what being a good boy is (and frequently they do, a common remark being something like "Aias has never been able to be a dog before—he doesn't know how to play with toys!"), there is a deep desire to be so. In fact, it is not clear that without this desire the dog would have survived in the first place. Thus, in these cases and stories, it is in virtue of some basic desire Aias has that he succeeds and finally is happy. The narrative points to something profound and untouchable. Now, whether these sorts of stories tell us something about doghood, or whether they are projections of our design, the fact that they resonate with us reveals something powerful and recognizable in the

1 Zoomies, or FRAPS (frenetic random activity periods), describe the commonly observed bursts of energy in dogs (especially young ones), during which they, e.g., run in figure 8's at full speed.

idea of a deep, inherent desire that is most basic to who we are. The inherent model of desire offers a way of accounting for such a desire, as will become clearer moving forward.

Let us now turn to a more germane example. Consider Maris the human being. One way to analyze Maris's human desires is to arrange them along a model of non-inherence, according to which Maris has different sorts of desires that, for example, correspond to the different parts of her soul, and that are specified by different objects according to judgments that Maris makes. Maris shares in the essence of human being, and this essence might be marked by rationality as its defining feature. Whether Maris has specifically a *desire* to reason is up for debate. Indeed, even if she does have an inherent desire to reason in general, she is unlikely to have a desire to reason about *one specific thing*. There might be a certain kind of thing Maris finds interesting—plants, for example—but she does not desire to intellect the essence of planthood by her nature. Now imagine Maris's human desire on an inherent model. On one account, Maris, insofar as she is a human being, might have a generic desire to know, and her discriminative powers may offer this generic desire objects. On another, she might have a specific desire for one object, particularly if, for example, that object is the only one of its kind. On an inherent account, this desire (generic or specific), insofar as it marks Maris as a human being, comes from the most basic part of her, whatever that is, and is always active insofar as she is a human being. For example, all human beings might have a basic desire to know, e.g., God, and insofar as that desire characterizes the human being qua human being, it is an inherent desire that will be active always for the human being who desires God.

This is where it gets a bit tricky. Human beings are unique, insofar as they are animals that are yet capable of a sophisticated level of rationality. In ancient and medieval theories of the soul, this meant that human animals have both animal and specifically human powers or parts of the soul. One result of this amphibious existence is that many human beings fail to live *as human beings*. In fact, many philosophers used this claim as an insult to the masses, who, insofar as they were said not to utilize and to develop their rational capacity sufficiently, were also said to act as or even to be animals rather than human beings. Thus, for many thinkers, people who are human beings in form and in capacity can nevertheless fail to realize their humanity. I mention this particularity because, when seen from the perspective of desire, such a failure, according to some of the thinkers in this study, also entails that some human beings never have truly human desire in the first place. If there is a discrete power that is connected to or directed toward a specific object, and—for whatever reason—that power is never activated, these human beings, on some accounts, not only

fail to realize their humanity by failing to reason. They do not even *want* to be human beings, since being human means desiring the object of which they are totally unaware. In terms of the models of this book, that means that an inherent desire may never arise, simply because the individual capacity might never be activated or put to use. Whether that is possible depends, of course, on many things. This situation arises in only one of the two instances of inherent desire that I examine: in one case, all things desire the One as part of their very being; in the other, only human beings of all animals have the power to apprehend the One, but this power needs to be activated before human beings will desire (permanently) with their true selves.

While I take these models to be exhaustive, they are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, presumably, as I mentioned above, all things that desire will have some kind of intrinsic desiring capacity, the question being whether this power alone is sufficient for the subject (if that subject is distinct from the power) to experience an instance of desiring. One's having an inherent desire that occurs in one's true self does not rule out desires that nevertheless function to keep the body alive and even that drive one to learn. One might have several inherent desires. One might have only non-inherent desires. The specifics are left open, to be determined by the thinkers we examine. Thus, as an intermediate summary, we should understand an inherent desire as an object-specific, permanent desire that occurs in something insofar as it is active, and a non-inherent desire as a specific desire formed by a combination of powers that coordinate to present an object of desire, which results in an instance of desire. It is my contention that we find desire interpreted and developed along these two lines in ancient and medieval philosophy, and that interpreting Aristotle was a particular catalyst for putting these two types of desire to work. This latter point is, in part, due to the fact that Aristotle articulates his psychological account of desire in a discussion of locomotion, a fact that some later interpreters either used to incorporate additional elements to an Aristotelian system by way of supplement, or found challenging as they tried to combine that account of desire in practical reason with desire in theoretical reason.

The thinkers and texts I will examine in this study all wrestle with and against Aristotle's various discussions of desire throughout his corpus. The two different approaches to desire that emerge from the Aristotelian tradition loosely correspond to the two levels on which Aristotle himself speaks of desire. On the one hand, Aristotle's discussion of desire in *DA* within the science of psychology identifies a desiderative power of the soul, which works in conjunction with intellect or imagination to move an individual toward the object desired. On a superficial reading, these desires work according to a non-inherent model of desire, insofar as instances of desire follow upon judgments

about what is valuable, and are themselves specifics manifestations of a universal desire. Aristotle's treatment of desire in ethical discussions, or even within physics or metaphysics, lacks psychological rigor, precisely because he is not concerned with psychology in those discussions, and such remarks complicate any straightforward reading of *DA*. We read at the beginning of the *EN* that all things desire or aim at the good, and in the discussion that follows we find various claims regarding human motivation and action. At the beginning of the *Met*., we further read that all humans desire to know by nature. These general claims do not immediately map onto the psychological divisions from *DA*, but make desiring sound like something human beings are doing in the background, all the time. Further, we find desire for form ascribed to matter in *Phys*. 192a21–24, and desire responsible for the movement of the heavens in *Met*. 1072a23–30. In the case of matter, Aristotle would seem to ascribe desire to something that does not even have a soul. Because they are parts of discussions in different sciences (and not always in the voice of Aristotle himself), these general statements about desire do not include clear statements about any underlying psychology. When one attempts to combine these diverse discussions of desire (as was the practice long before philosophers of the Islamic world themselves took up this habit), it is not easy to map the different ways of talking about desire onto one another. For example, when one considers the role of desire in properly human activity, intellection, it is not prima facie clear in what way the psychology of the *DA* accommodates it, since the discussion of desire in *DA* explicitly concerns the role of desire in locomotion or acts of will, not intellection per se, since intellection is not a motion. Further, Aristotle's claim that human beings desire certain things *by nature* may not seem immediately meaningful in the light of his power-based psychology, according to which desire for any given end is not obviously guaranteed. From this perspective, the path to affirming that human beings desire to know by nature is not particularly clear: some human beings could simply not have this desire, as frequently appears to be the case. One might then wonder how Aristotelian psychology can account for the claim that desire is always present in human beings as a way of realizing their human potential by being rational animals. Thus, in the later tradition when thinkers want to combine everything Aristotle says about desire, they have some interpretative work to do, and this work will include difficulty determining to what extent and in what way desire is related to the desiring subject.

Jessica Moss made a rather similar distinction in her investigation of the role of cognition and evaluation in Aristotle's understanding of apparent goods. As she argues for the necessary role of evaluative cognition in instances of desiring, she specifies that there are two different ways that motivation might

emerge.[2] The first is by an act in which evaluative cognition—be it in the form of sensation, imagination, or reason—itself "generates desire for its object."[3] The second way is that motivation "begins with desires," after the existence of which "instrumental cognition [then] focuses desire on a particular object," a relevant example being the realization of an appetite to drink, after which cognition works to identify a drinkable object.[4] Moss's own emphasis is that even in cases of instrumental cognition, cognition works by identifying something as good (as opposed to an extensionalist interpretation of apparent goods).[5] While the investigation that I undertake in this book does not discuss desire and its object in terms of motivation, Moss's division is generally drawn along the same lines as the models I am working with here. The model on which an evaluation by sensation, imagination, or reason incites desire for a specific object indeed matches the description of non-inherent desire I have given. The model on which desire for a good (apparent or real) already exists and is aided by sensation, imagination, or reason, which focuses it or identifies an appropriate instance of the desired object in question, matches the description of inherent desire. Of course, Moss's division applies to Aristotle's account of desire specifically, and I will be discussing desire, not so much in Aristotle per se, but in the later Aristotelian tradition, especially within the Islamic world. But Moss's discussion is important, not only because it helps substantiate the division I am making here, but also because it reveals how basic the distinction is and how challenging elucidation can prove to be. That is important, because it shows that the remarkable thing we find in the following chapters is not the *fact* that philosophers have recourse to inherent desire, but *what use* they make of inherent desire.

The model that I am presenting here and using throughout this book is itself different from Moss's division in a few basic and important ways. First, the inherent/non-inherent distinction is broader, and thus has a wider application. Moss's division applies to Aristotle's psychology specifically, and I do not intend the division I am arguing for here to be specifically connected to any one author, even if it is working in the context of philosophers responding to a particular problem in Aristotle. While most of the examples that I will examine throughout this book are psychological, not all of them can be reduced to psychology or even to noetics. The generality of these models allows them to apply to non-psychological contexts, in this study relevant to the metaphysical account of

2 For her argument for evaluative cognition, see Moss, *Aristotle on the Apparent Good*, 3–21.

3 Moss, 19.

4 Moss, 19.

5 Moss, 20.

inherent desire I argue for in Plotinus. But the generality accommodates other metaphysical accounts of desire as well, such as that found in the *Fons Vitae* of Ibn Gabirol. Thus, although the division is particularly relevant to psychology, it is by no means limited to it. This point raises a connection to another division in desire drawn in contemporary research on Aristotle, namely, that of Giles Pearson. In his general study of desire in Aristotle, Pearson divides desire into two kinds of states, occurrent or dispositional.[6] Occurrent desires are those that, well, occur to you discretely, or, are occurring right now, e.g. a desire for food or for sleep. By contrast, dispositional states are those that are generally present, e.g. a desire to be happy or healthy. Since the model I am using here expands beyond psychology, and thus beyond the realm of the intentional states applicable within the realm of psychology, the division of states is not uniformly comparable to the division I am making with these two models. Though there may be general qualities by which one can draw correlations between them—for example that inherent desires, being permanent, might be dispositional—I will not do so for the sake of precision, since one ought to expect these divisions to change according to author. In that way, I do not take what I am saying to go against Pearson's investigation, but to be able to work concurrently with it.

The difficulty regarding the unification of claims about desire made by Aristotle and by the ensuing tradition carries over into philosophy of the Islamic world, as Aristotle's thought, along with much material from commentators such as Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius, and Philoponus, entered into Arabic through the Graeco-Arabic translation movement. The hermeneutical situation was complicated further through the very act of translation, wherein changes were frequently made. This philosophical ambiguity regarding desire also met autochthonous positions on desire's role in the human being. The two "Aristotelian" ways of understanding desire remain in figures like Avicenna, who develops a sophisticated account of the internal senses in the section of his *Healing* (*Kitāb al-šifāʾ*) called the *Book of the Soul* (*Kitāb al-nafs*). There, in his discussion of the powers in the animal soul in IV.4, he offers an explanation of desire and its role in motion. He does not extend such discussion to properly human desire, for example the human desire to know. Further, one might consider the difference between his discussion of desire in *Book of the Soul* and the way he uses desire in his *Treatise on Love* (*Risāla fī l-ʿišq*). In the latter, Avicenna sets out a global theory of a love for the First Cause in which all things participate, animate and inanimate. He articulates this love as one that each thing has

6 This discussion is found in Pearson, *Aristotle on Desire*, 19–23.

for its perfection by nature. This way of discussing and implementing desire is much closer to the generalizing claims Aristotle makes throughout his work, in addition to potentially being an effort to incorporate Aristotle's remark that matter desires form in a philosophically meaningful way (something we will see Plotinus do as well).

One thing often missing from the Aristotelianism of this tradition is explicit and extended discussion of desire within human activity properly delineated, by which I mean the role of desire within theoretical reasoning, as the drive of contemplation in particular. We find discussion of rational choice and will, but by and large, philosophers addressed the desire of human beings with respect to practical intellect and action. This way of discussing human desires is straightforwardly Aristotelian, picking up on the discussion of choice and wish from the *EN* and *DA*. By contrast, we find little attention paid to the role desire has in *knowing*, beyond acting or being virtuous. As a result, desire's function in the human being *qua* human being—by which I mean *qua* intellecting individual—remains frequently vague. Pearson acknowledges the apparent restriction of Aristotle's discussion of desire as involving locomotion, rightly highlighting that we are not entitled to move from the fact that locomotion requires desire to infer consequently that desire entails locomotion.[7] He further highlights the ambiguity concerning desire in *DA* III.9–11, and offers some examples from *HA* that suggest a broader application of ὄρεξις in Aristotle's thought.[8] While he is surely correct on both accounts, it is not clear how to proceed if we want to understand in what way Aristotle took desire to attach, for example, to objects of contemplation. At any rate, the authors I examine in the following book will work to varying extents to account for desire for contemplation on an Aristotelian model, and they, at least, did not always take it as a given that the model explaining locomotion works in the case of contemplation. Specifically, in the western Islamic world during the 6th cen. AH/12th cen. AD, we find two thinkers who address this question, and who do so from starkly different perspectives. Ibn Bāǧǧa and Ibn Ṭufayl, two Aristotelians of al-Andalus, each explicitly accounts for and characterizes the desire proper to human beings qua human beings, and each implicitly utilizes one of the two above models of desire in his attempt to do so. Insofar as they focus explicitly on the human perspective, specifically beyond the realm of action or choice, their shared starting point is unique. Let us look more closely at the way in which these approaches relate to the human good.

7 Pearson, 28.

8 Pearson, 28–32.

## 2 The Two Models and the Human Goal

The two models of desire laid out in this book relate to the human goal in different ways. Since for thinkers in ancient and medieval philosophy human desire is usually connected in some way to reason, most often one must understand human desire with respect to reason and, in turn, the truth. Again, what I am primarily interested in showing in this study is the use that could be and indeed was made of this distinction, specifically the use philosophers made of the model of inherent desire to push the bounds of philosophy. The role of reason and the character of truth determine in what way desire functions and the extent to which desire is informed. In the following discussions of desire, we will find that different clusters of traits tend to emerge alongside each model. In the case of the inherent model of desire, desire is object-specific, inherently attached to and driven towards its object, whatever that is. In fact, since desire is generally shaped by the object it desires, in cases of inherent desire there is a basic structural parallel between the desiring subject and the desired object, since this relation between them is permanent. On this account, since desire is essential to the subject, desire is active as soon as the subject is active and is being whatever it is. As an extension of this feature, we find that desire is not externally determined. That is, desire does not need an additional activity to give it an object—it has one already. The models I will highlight in the work of Plotinus and Ibn Ṭufayl work with inherent desire for one specific object that is the only example of its kind, namely, the Good or God.[9] Thus, they utilize inherent desire in order to account for this desire in particular. As I will discuss again in Chapter Three, on a naïve reading of Aristotle's account of desire from *DA*, desire must follow upon an evaluation of some sort: a judgment, an imagination, etc. But inherent desire, outside of the Aristotelian account (or at least outside of an intensionalist reading of Aristotle on the apparent good), leaves open the possibility of there being no such judgment. In the cases I examine, since the desire is object specific, the subject might not need to judge the object good or valuable. In Plotinus's account of inherent desire, desire is built into substance as such, *before* any capacity for judgment.[10]

---

9 Thus, inherent desire for one specific thing itself may be an extension of generic desire, insofar as it is desire for a class of objects (e.g. First Principles) of which there can be only one (i.e. God).

10 In this way, Plotinus's account of substance may share some basic elements with dynamic accounts of substance, and the role of desire in his account of substance may work parallel to desire in dynamic accounts.

These two models open, or at least highlight, the various ways in which desire might originate, and these differences affect the way in which reason relates to desire. According to what I have been calling the naïve account of desire, reason acts as the power responsible for shaping or grasping the object of desire and "presenting" it to the subject, which may or may not subsequently desire said object. In the inherent model of desire, this is not the case. Reason may well be necessary insofar as the desiring subject is also a rational subject, and thus a subject that approaches the world rationally. In turn, the desiring subject may utilize reason to reach or to recognize its goal (as in Moss's description of instrumental cognition), but it does not need an object to be fashioned for it. The potential desire is for that object *alone*, and once activated this desire is always present. Now, this basic connection does not require that the object always be clear to the desiring subject. Indeed, one of the attractive things about a model of inherent desire is that it accounts for desire that the subject has but that the subject may be unable to articulate. Indeed, this scenario is that for which the two models of inherent desire I examine below work to account. Further, this particular model of inherent desire neither requires nor implies that other kinds of desire do not exist. For example, if the specific object of desire is the truth, or God, it may very well be the case that the happiness one *also* desires is constituted by obtaining the truth or knowing God. In other words, the specific desire may be regulative of desires that ultimately can be reduced to or subsumed under this essential desire. The specificity of this essential desire identifies the most basic way in which the subject as a subject *is*, and this way of being will in turn dictate other aspects of the subject on an elementary level. This point thus has consequences for the role of reason for our thinkers, since desire need not be presented with an object crafted by the mind or imagination. To some degree, this fact allows for an account of the human being on which reason functions distinctly from essential desiring (although this separation is by no means required by inherent desire). That separation creates a space for higher levels of supra-rational or even "mystical" aspects of the human self or the desiring subject, insofar as the desiring power is object-bound from the beginning.

Finally, in the instances of inherent desire we examine in this study, the truth is unlimited. By unlimited, I mean it is of such a nature that the mind cannot comprehend it, such that it is something the human being cannot grasp, or something that cannot be experienced in all its fullness at any one time. Accounts of truth that characterize the truth or reality as unlimited face a unique problem, because it is difficult to account for a connection between a finite subject (the human being) and an infinite object (e.g., God). If the object is infinite, inconceivable, or perhaps even contentless, on what grounds

can one claim that a rational subject, who grasps its objects by defining them, can grasp such an object? Placing an inherent desire at the center of the subject's essence allows one to make this claim. Since, on the inherent model, the subject *is* a desiring subject that desires always, the model offers a way for an unlimited object of truth also to be an object of desiring. This subject, we will find, might be soul, Intellect, matter, or the rational power. But the important point for us to see is that the subject *as itself* is by its nature desiring some one thing in particular. Somewhat ironically, although one might expect the subject in this case to attain its goal (since, presumably, it really knows what it wants), in the examples we examine, the desiring subject is frustrated since its object is unlimited. Thus, in the examples I examine there is a connection between the unlimitedness of the truth, the nature of desire, and a modified role of reason. If truth is unlimited, formless, or beyond comprehension, attempts to grasp it in order to satisfy the subject's desire will always, to some extent, come up short. Nevertheless, this situation actually allows for the possibility of attaining an unlimited subject to any degree, however slight. In fact, the inherent desire for the utmost human goal, embedded in the human subject, goes some way in explaining on what grounds human beings—with their insufficient capabilities—can have the awareness of such an object at all.

By contrast, on the non-inherent model, desire is a discrete, general power of the human being that can express itself in different ways and direct itself toward different kinds of objects. On this model, desires stem from one power, and need to be incited by something external, in the Aristotelian case, by imagination or intellect, or by a concept presented by one of these powers. For example, one might imagine and then desire strawberry ice cream, but this desire may satisfy different ends: I might desire the ice cream because I like the taste of strawberries, because I am hot and wish to cool down, or because I will use it to appease my nephew. In instances of the non-inherent model of desire, we find different traits that correspond with and occur alongside this sort of desire. In the particular instances we examine, we find that truth is rationally attained. This model fits nicely with a naïve reading of Aristotle's power-based psychology. According to this model, the human subject, to whom the desire occurs, has many powers, one of which is the desiring power. This power coordinates with another power that supplies the object of desire, and the desiring power moves the subject toward the object of its desire, its first mover. This model of desire as I have understood it and as we find it in our authors applies specifically to soul, either human soul or animal soul. Importantly, instances of desire on this model can and do cease, be it a permanent or temporary cessation. For when reason achieves its goal, for example, by hitting upon middle

terms of syllogisms that convey the true nature of reality, the desire for those objects can stop, since in this attainment the subject is satisfied in its complete grasp of its object.

An added consequence of the distinction between the two models is that the non-inherent model of desire does not guarantee that anyone desires anything in particular. For example, if one's desire can be directed at anything, there must something added to help guide one's desire toward a specific end (habituation, logical proof, the right teacher). For if the desiring power is universal and any discrete desire contingent, it is not clear by what means desire alone would ever be constrained to want a specific thing, e.g. knowledge of universals. This case would be in contrast to one in which one's desire is for one object in particular—as long as this desire is active, one will desire that specific object, e.g. the Good or God. A human being can have the rational power activated, and the same person can have the desiderative power activated, but that does not ensure that human beings will ever want to think or want what they think. But the inherent model, insofar as desire is innate to the subject's activity, guarantees that the subject with that desire, once operative, is in fact desiring. Again, this fact does not entail that *all* human beings, who have the capacity for an inherent, properly human desire, will indeed activate it. There is plenty of room on both models for intellectual misanthropy. But it should be clear by now that the inherent models we will examine provide better assurance that the subject in question, when desiring, indeed desires the specific object appropriate to it in particular. Indeed, the use of an inherent desire at the heart of human experience is a good indication of what the philosopher at issue finds indisputable. Thus, where there is inherent desire, there are interesting and important questions to be asked about its role, its object, and for what reason the thinker takes the desire to be granted in the first place. Those answers will in turn give us basic information about what the author takes to be unshakable fact about the being or reality of the subject (or more).

These two models also account for diverse types of human experience. The non-inherent model, as I understand it, accounts for human experience by grounding it in the definition of variegated aspects of the world through constant evaluation, in cooperation with desire for some but not all of these discrete objects of thought, imagination, or sense. The inherent model of desire allows for a rather different kind of human experience. On this model the truly human desire may not be for many different discrete things or even for a generic group of things, but for a single one. This desire is for a specific something one may be unable to put their finger on, but which is there, nonetheless. It is this experience that I think the example of Aias the rescue dog highlights above. In a way, this sort of desire is the opposite of what we find on the

non-inherent model (and not merely in name). In that case, desire is determined insofar as its object is always determined. One has an object apprehended and determined by reason or by imagination, and then desire attaches to that thing. In the inherent case, the desire precedes the exact determination or complete apprehension of its object. One has a desire for something in particular, but that something in particular might be only partially present, something that one cannot totally identify, but which one desires regardless. Thus, in addition to the divergent roles of reason and conceptions of truth we examined above, fundamentally different accounts of desire's relation to human experience may be explained by recourse to these two different models of desire.

## 3 Structure and Scope

The following study comprises six chapters, and examines the notion of desire as found in the work of five thinkers. I selected the authors I discuss based on two guiding principles. On the one hand, I wanted to select thinkers in whose work the two models were clear. On the other hand, I wanted the study to tell a historical story of the way in which these two models were transmitted into and used within philosophy of the Islamic world from Greek philosophy. The way in which I chose to tell this story takes us from Plotinus, through the Graeco-Arabic translation movement, to al-Fārābī to the two Andalusī Aristotelians who differently dealt with the notions of desire they received from their respective influences. This book thus has two working goals, one a general philosophical point about desire and the other a historical point about two philosophers of al-Andalus. I also work from what is not a guiding principle so much as an assumption, which is that the non-inherent model of desire is more familiar and, for readers of Aristotle, immediately more intuitive than the inherent model of desire. Because of this (hopefully warranted) assumption, I begin the book with a chapter on the thinker whose work evinces the inherent model more than any other Greek influence in the Islamic world, Plotinus. To varying degrees, each thinker I examine here is working with, around, or against Aristotle on desire. In the case of Plotinus this is doubly so, since, when selections of the *Enn*. were translated into Arabic, one recension of this translation circulated as the *Theology of Aristotle*, making Plotinus's thought no longer something that argued with or even exploited Aristotle's thought, but something that was considered part of the Aristotelian corpus. This misattribution led to conflation of Plotinian and Aristotelian ideas, bringing about more uncertainty on the topic of desire in particular.

Before moving to a chapter overview, I want to lay out the ways in which the thinkers I examine respond to the ambiguity they perceive in the relation between desire and the desiring subject, in all cases variously influenced by Aristotle's remarks on desire. In general, we find that philosophers make one of two conceptual maneuvers in order to account for the relation between desire and reason. The first maneuver is to make desire effectively the servant of reason, and indeed, we find al-Fārābī use just this language to describe the role of the striving power within the human soul. In this move, reason's monopoly on truth apprehension remains unchallenged by desire insofar as reason inhabits a distinct, more basic, and guiding position than desire within the human soul. Further, in the case of human beings, reason functions as a defining feature of desire from the beginning. On this reading, reason or intellect apprehends truth on its own merits, not following desire instrumentally but using desire for its own ends. The second maneuver is to identify the relevant truth-apprehending power as the desiderative power. This maneuver rejects the potential need for cooperation between two different powers in favor of collapsing these otherwise distinct powers into one. This decision also connects desire to its object in kind from the beginning, so that desire is something that the rational power will do as part of what it is, the role of evaluative cognition here left open. This move also leaves open the possibility that truth is separate from reason or intellect, since insofar as it cedes that desire is fundamentally connected to its object in kind, reason might (but need not) be granted a merely instrumental role in the acquisition of the object in question. Indeed, we will find multiple philosophers claiming that apprehending powers themselves—these powers being not only those like reason and imagination, but also the powers of sense—desire their objects. So while this second maneuver opens the door for novel accounts of human desire, it does not require them, and thinkers frequently use it to account for the standard array of human powers and human desires.

Plotinus (204/5–270 AD) is a great, if not the best, example of the inherent model of desire. Taking to heart Aristotle's claim that all things desire the good, he lays out his metaphysical system in such a way that all things indeed desire the good as part of their very being. This desire in his system is connected to the Good in kind, and indeed is the operation of the intellectual or psychological capacity to apprehend some image of the One. The adaptation of Plotinus's work into Arabic (3rd cen. AH/9th cen. AD) is a clear example of philosophers' and translators' intellectual struggle when faced with this model of desire as they tried to accommodate Plotinus's thought alongside an Aristotelian impulse. On their account, desire is inherent to soul alone, and the adaptation has removed desire from Intellect almost completely, thus drawing a firm line between desire and Intellect. At the study's halfway mark, I

spend a chapter examining Aristotle's own psychology of desire, especially as it was translated into Arabic (3rd–4th cen. AH/9th–10th cen. AD) and at work in the thought of al-Fārābī (257–331AH/870–943AD). Therein we find three presentations of the *DA* in a struggle to relay the exact position of the desiring power in the soul, with the result that each paraphrase or translation offers a slightly different account of desire. Later, al-Fārābī himself accounts for human desire strongly along a non-inherent model, and makes the striving soul the servant of apprehending powers. Thereafter, we make a historical and intellectual jump to 6th cen. AH/12th cen. AD al-Andalus to the thought of Ibn Bāǧǧa (d. 533AH/1139AD) and Ibn Ṭufayl (d. 581AH/1185AD). In chapters four through six, I turn to analyze an explicit struggle between these two thinkers. In this examination, we find each thinker using one of the models of desire. Each selects aspects of his influences' conceptions of desire in a way that illustrates the basic difficulty—and disagreement—over the way in which we ought to understand desire in the human subject. Following upon al-Fārābī, Ibn Bāǧǧa takes over much of the former's non-inherent model, and keeps desire fundamentally separate from the true human activity. Ibn Ṭufayl presents an inherent account of desire within all powers of apprehension, functionally identifying them, and develops an account of a "power" distinct from and irreducible to reason that he identifies as the true human essence. The varied incorporations of desire into their work reveal the ways in which each model of desire makes room for and to some extent entails the corresponding features of truth, reason, and human perfection. These Andalusī chapters encapsulate the two different models of desire, and the comparison elucidates the struggle with Aristotelianism that surrounds those models. In addition, the role of desire in each of these thinkers or textual traditions (in the case of the *Plotiniana Arabica*) has not been fully investigated thus far, and each chapter serves either as a general overview of desire (as in the chapters on the texts of the so-called Arabic Plotinus, al-Fārābī, Ibn Bāǧǧa, and Ibn Ṭufayl), or as an investigation of a specific use of desire within the work of one thinker (as in the chapter on Plotinus).

Chapter one thus investigates the role of desire for the Good in Plotinus's thought. It examines the whole of Plotinus's *Enn.* and provides a holistic account of this desire within Plotinus's thought. I give careful consideration to the terminology of desire, and argue that Plotinus uses consistent vocabulary to demarcate desire for the Good on all hypostases of being. I also highlight the way in which Plotinus radically accounts for this desire by locating it within substance as such, thus giving us a clear instance of an inherent model of desire. The chapter also examines precisely what it means on Plotinus's account for something to be Good at all, and discusses the process of becoming good-like through becoming virtuous and assimilating to Intellect in the

return to the Good. In the last section, I clarify the role of desire with respect to form and rationality, further clarifying the way in which desire for the Good is shaped internally by its own object. Over the course of the chapter, we find a philosophically sophisticated account underlying Plotinus's intuitions about the nature of human experience.

Following Plotinus's thought to the translation of his work into Arabic, the second chapter takes up a thorough examination of the surviving Arabic texts of Plotinus's work. The bulk of the chapter forms an examination of desire as it occurs throughout the *Plotiniana Arabica*. In addition to examining the philosophical aspects of desire, I here, as always, pay careful attention to the terminology, and show that we find Plotinus's account of desire is truncated due, in part, to translation choices. As a result, his nuanced account of desire for the Good is lost in translation, and desire for the Good reverts to a more properly Aristotelian desire for God. The final section of the chapter presents an examination of Avicenna's (370–428 AH/980–1037 AD) commentary on the *ThA*. There I highlight his remarks on desire and foreshadow the points that will be of interest later in the book. In both the adaptation and in Avicenna's commentary, we find a steady and intensifying Aristotelianizing of Plotinus's thought, both on the topic of desire and on other important points, such as the nature of soul and the identity and function of the highest cause.

The third chapter investigates explicitly non-inherent models of desire, the one found in Aristotle's *DA* and that later developed by al-Fārābī. The chapter begins by examining desire from *DA* III.9–11, especially in what way key aspects are translated into Arabic from the Greek, and argues for the non-inherent account I take Aristotle ultimately to offer. Since there are three surviving Arabic presentations of the *DA*, and since the two translations were available in al-Andalus, I examine the important aspects, and especially differences, in all three. After doing so, I look into the role of desire in al-Fārābī's own thought, including the apparently different sorts of desire at work within his account of intellectual activity. Then, I address al-Fārābī's own analysis of Aristotle's philosophy, showing the important place desire was taken to hold in Aristotle's thought, according to al-Fārābī. Finally, I conclude the non-inherent nature of desire for both, highlighting the unique situation of the First Cause's desire in al-Fārābī's works.

The Aristotelianizing of desire comes to a head in Ibn Bāǧǧa's philosophy. Here, we find a thoroughly Aristotelian thinker who rightly earns his reputation as a rationalist. But nevertheless, one finds discussion of desire a common feature of his work. The study of his remarks show that he placed much value in desire and its role in reaching the human goal. Chapter four investigates these remarks, and lays out a consistent theory of desire that clearly rests upon a non-

inherent model of desire. Ibn Bāǧǧa's sources help to clarify his reliance upon this model, as we can see the lineage of the *DA* through the work of al-Fārābī, to whom Ibn Bāǧǧa is most indebted. We find that he conceives of all human activity, including acts of demonstration, to function according to a universal mechanism of desire plus a concept toward which this desire is directed. This intellectualist understanding of human activity extends to his understanding of virtuous activity, and leads to the ultimate goal of being human.

The two final chapters concern Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān*. This thinker and his text alone receive two chapters, since the narrative and allegorical nature of the text require more attention and explication in order to make my approach to the text clear. The fifth chapter begins by examining Ibn Ṭufayl's own intentions for writing the text as he tells us in the prologue, including his remarks on his sources and the way in which these remarks set up the story. I argue that Ibn Ṭufayl's insistence on the centrality of both Avicenna and al-Ġazālī (448(?)–505 AH/1056(?)–1111 AD) is important even at the very beginning of the narrative, where Ibn Ṭufayl offers two different accounts of Ḥayy's arrival on the island. Chapter six argues that *Ḥayy* offers a clear though extremely condensed account of desire that utilizes an inherent model of desire. Thus, the final chapter thoroughly examines the extent to which desire relates to the human being in his text and is flagged in the prologue and epilogue as the goal of the text itself. After considering desire within the narrative, I examine Ibn Ṭufayl's two primary influences, Avicenna and al-Ġazālī, and the way in which Ibn Ṭufayl combined their discussions and characterizations of desire as a basis for and supplement to his own. The chapter proceeds by setting his theory of desire within the progression of Ḥayy's education and philosophical development, arguing for the ubiquitous role of desire in Ḥayy's own properly human activity. In turn, I argue for a unified account of his intellectual endeavors, centered around the notion of agency. The general argument of the chapter is that Ḥayy has a desire proper to his essence that, starting as a child, is attached to and moving toward the True Agent for the entirety of its activity, following the various notions of the self and agency Ḥayy develops throughout his life.

CHAPTER 1

# An Inherent Model of Desire: Plotinus on Desire for the Good

Plotinus was born in Egypt and lived in the 3rd century A.D. Now called the founder of Neoplatonism, he studied philosophy in Alexandria with Ammonius Saccas, after which spent nearly twenty-five years teaching in Rome.[1] In his last treatise, I.7(54), called "On the Primal Good and the Other Goods," Plotinus lays out the relationship between the Good and all other things. In this short reflection, we find a succinct statement of the Good's definition: "For, once more, we must posit the Good to be that upon which all things depend, whereas it depends on nothing. For in this way it is true that it is 'that which all things desire' (τὸ οὗ πάντα ἐφίεται)."[2] Plotinus ends his quote with Aristotle's well-known claim at the beginning of the *EN* that all things desire the Good, and his brief definition of the Good would seem, at first blush, simply a remark on moral psychology.[3] However, in the following lines, Plotinus makes clear that his assessment and assimilation of this Aristotelian quotation is more profound. Specifically, as I will argue in this chapter, his explanation of the actual relationship between all things and the Good reveals that he understands this claim to be metaphysical, not only ethical. I will articulate what I take to be Plotinus's inherent model of desire, according to which desire for the Good is a basic, integral part of the desiring subject. He identifies this desiring with the actual capacity to apprehend the Good or goodness, with the unifying gaze of the Soul or of the Intellect. This identification, I will argue, relates the desire to its object in kind—in this case, one specific object, and ensures that desire never ceases, being both the activity of substance and for an object that is unattainable. For Plotinus, this desire goes beyond psychology

1 We are fortunate to Plotinus's student, Porphyry, for telling us much about his life, whose somewhat hagiographical biography introduced his own edition of Plotinus's treatises. See *On the Life of Plotinus and the Order of His Books by Porphyry of Tyre* in Plotinus, *The Enneads*.

2 I.7(54).1.21–23. All quotations of Plotinus's Greek text are from Henry–Schwyzer's 1982 edition. The English translations are from Plotinus, *The Enneads*, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson and trans. George Boys-Stones et al.

3 For a general account of desire in Aristotle, see again Giles Pearson, *Aristotle on Desire*.

(although he speaks of it in psychological terms), and is woven into the fabric of reality. His remarks might be taken as a mere trope within his metaphysical system, but the nature of this goodness and its connection to a basic, ubiquitous desire have important consequences for the constitution of all parts of his system.

> But how are all the other things related to the Good? In fact, things without soul are related to Soul, and Soul is related to it through Intellect. And things have something of it by each of them being one in a certain way, and by existing in a certain way. And they partake of form, too. And as they, then, partake of unity, being, and form, so they partake of the Good.[4]

These three things—unity, being, and form—constitute the connection all things have to the Good, and generally suggest the way in which goodness—and the desire *for* goodness—are metaphysical and structural. Something has a part of the Good simply by *being* and being a *unity*, both of which imply that something has a form or an image of a form. As a result of being something, and being something other than the Good, it turns out that each thing desires, ἐφίεται, the Good. This desire occurs not because each thing has some kind of moral interest in goodness (although that interest might also be present), but because this desire is in the basic construction and make-up of all things. On this account, Plotinus takes Aristotle's descriptive moral claim and sets it within the foundation of his metaphysics. As a result, what goodness is, in what way things have it, and on what grounds they desire it are questions the answers to which are formative of Plotinus's system at the deepest level. Further, as I will argue below, the ubiquity and primacy of desire for the Good will have further repercussions regarding the relation between form and formlessness. But before looking at the texts at issue, let us first turn to a discussion of terminology to define this inquiry further.

## 1 Terminology of Desire

A sustained examination of desire, ἔφεσις, occurs in the next section, but a preliminary overview of Plotinus's general terminology of desire would be con-

4 I.7(54).2.1–6.

structive. Although I cannot claim to be exhaustive in the following overview, I aim to offer a reasonably comprehensive account both of the function of the various terms Plotinus employs to denote desire, and of the ways in which these might relate to one another. My aim here is both to assess his language accurately and to show on what grounds I have narrowed the focus of this investigation to ἔφεσις. To my knowledge, there has been little extended study of the function of these specific terms in scholarship, outside of the short examinations of René Arnou, Lloyd Gerson, and Michael Oliver Wiitala.[5] Arnou discusses ἔφεσις and ὄρεξις, depicting the former as broadly neutral (while acknowledging that it sometimes connects to what is higher) and the latter, following Aristotle's usage, as capable of being swayed by erroneous reasoning but also led straight by correct reasoning.[6] His analysis of ἐπιθυμία is even shorter, which he contrasts with βούλησις. A result of embodied soul, ἐπιθυμία reacts to pleasure and pain, inclining to the former and avoiding the latter.[7] Arnou does mention an unusual use of ἐπιθυμία in III.5(50).9.50, and uses it as an example of why "Avec Plotin il faut renoncer à la satisfaction de distribuer sinon les concepts du moins leurs signes en catégories étanches."[8] He characterizes Plotinus's use of βούλησις as in VI.8(39) to be, in part, rational desire *simpliciter*: "Pour Plotin aussi la βούλησις est désir du Bien …, désir raisonnable … immatériel, spirituel … et libre."[9] As I will argue in the rest of this chapter, it is ἔφεσις that denotes the desire for the Good in a catholic sense, beyond the scope of βούλησις. Arnou's claims reflect his larger reading of the terms for desire: "En fait entre tous ces termes ἔρως, ἔφεσις, πόθος, ὄρεξις, ὁρμή, il ne reste chez Plotin que des nuances, qui souvent s'effacent."[10] Striking here of course is that ἐπιθυμία is not included in this group. Arnou also classifies βούλησις as rational appetite, in contrast with ἐπιθυμία, following Aristotle and the Stoics, where βούλησις entails a desire in accordance with reason (ὄρεξις κατὰ τὸν λογισμόν) and ἐπιθυμία a desire against reason (ὄρεξις παρὰ τὸν λογισμόν).[11] Gerson broadly agrees with Arnou in his assessment of Plotinus's terminology of desire.[12] He

5 See Arnou, *Le désir de Dieu*, 60–64; Gerson, *Plotinus*, 273ft63; and Gerson, *From Plato to Platonism*, 187–188; Wiitala, "Desire and the Good in Plotinus," 649–666.

6 Arnou, *Le désir de Dieu*, 59–60.

7 Arnou, 64.

8 Arnou, 64fn4.

9 Arnou, 64.

10 Arnou, 63.

11 Arnou, 63–64. For a discussion on the terminology of desire in Aristotle, see Pearson, *Aristotle on Desire*, 4–7.

12 Gerson, *Plotinus*, 151.

accounts for Plotinus's unusual use of ἐπιθυμία at III.5(50).9.50 as due to the dependence on the discussion of Plato's *Symposium*, where Plato uses the verb form in 204a.[13] Wiitala distinguishes two types of desire in the soul specifically, relegating ἐπιθυμία to bodily desires and ὄρεξις and ἔφεσις to desire for the good.[14]

My own remarks are meant as a complement to these earlier conclusions. From Plotinus's vocabulary for desire, ἔφεσις is the most far-reaching, for he attributes it to all levels of being, from metaphorical or as-if attributions to the One all the way to matter. Plotinus's use of ἔφεσις never *requires* rationality, but since it is most often directed toward the Good, it operates in the proximity of rationality. To some extent, as I will highlight below, Plotinus's use of this term reminds us that rationality and goodness are not necessarily coextensive, as ἔφεσις to some extent exploits the cleavage between rationality and goodness. This drive toward goodness manifests in an imitation of goodness or unity, although there is one instance in which Plotinus uses this term to describe individuals who are desiring bad things (ἐφιέμενοι κακῶν).[15] The big picture claim that all things desire the Good extends even to animals, plants, and things that are not technically alive.[16]

Plotinus's use of this term in particular is worthy of note. His terminology of desire is generally Aristotelian (although he notoriously switches between Aristotelian and Platonic ways of delineating soul), and his use of ἔφεσις is, to some extent, no exception. His willingness to attribute ἔφεσις to things that are not alive may be an assimilation of Aristotle's remarks in *Phys*. 192a18–20 where he to some extent attributes ἔφεσις to matter in discussion of rival views. However, his insistence on matter and non-living things' ἔφεσις of the Good, combined with the fact that, according to Plotinus, unity and goodness are coextensive, may also be in direct response to Aristotle. For in his discussion of the idea of the good in *EE* 1218a15–28, Aristotle criticizes both the move to identify unity with goodness on the grounds that numbers desire, ἔφίενται, and that lifeless things could have desire, ὄρεξις.[17] Plotinus's insistence that all things have ἔφεσις

13 Gerson, 273fn63.

14 Wiitala, "Desire and the Good in Plotinus," 652.

15 For the former, see for example III.4(12).2.14, III.5(50).1.54, or III.7(45).4.31. For the latter, see III.5(50).7.32.

16 IV.4(28).16.25; III.8(30).7.15–16; III.2(47).3.35–36.

17 To what extent ἔφεσις and ὄρεξις are synonyms is an open question for interpreters, as Aristotle at times seems to distinguish between these terms and at times to use them synonymously. On these terms in the ancient commentators, see, for example, Theophrastus, *Theophrastus on First Principles*, 114–117, with Gutas's commentary on 273; and Alexander of Aphrodisias in Genequand, *Alexander of Aphrodisias*, 7, 74, and 78.

may be both a response to this criticism of the good, and a radical assimilation of Aristotle's remarks in the *Phys*. It is, in fact, Plotinus's use of ἔφεσις in particular that I have in mind when, throughout this book, I refer to his extrapolation of Aristotle's remarks on desire.

Historically, ἐπιθυμία is a loaded term, given that Plato uses it in the *Republic* to identify the "irrational" desires of the lowest part of the soul.[18] Plotinus almost always keeps such a characterization of ἐπιθυμία, for this appetite develops directly from the body. Plotinus even describes a stage of desire proper to the body "pre-desire" (προεπιθυμία) or "fore-desire" (προθυμία).[19] This desire *begins* in the body, and is not yet the "clearly-defined" desire taken up by the soul, an earlier point of development rather than a distinct type of desire, as Dillon and Blumenthal rightly highlight.[20] But there are two notable exceptions in which Plotinus uses the term to connote an appetite for the Good. One instance is the aforementioned III.5(50).9.50–55, where Plotinus explains the production of Love from soul insofar as soul desires but fails to attain the Good. Here Plotinus explicitly states that soul's desire for the Good is like matter's unlimited appetite. The second is in V.3(49).11.7, where Plotinus ascribes appetite to inchoate intellect. In both instances, the appetite is connected to the notion of unlimitedness, which I will discuss below.

The next term to consider is ὄρεξις and its derivatives, and unlike ἔφεσις or ἐπιθυμία, ὄρεξις is proper to the soul alone.[21] Relevant to this investigation is that Plotinus explicitly distinguishes it from λόγος (also proper to the soul), and like ἔφεσις it is directed by and large toward the Good. In the two passages in which Plotinus explicitly does distinguish ὄρεξις from reason, he uses ὀρέγεται to express a movement toward the Good that is independent from reason and in some way unconscious. The first is in III.4(15), where he says that for the good person, "There exists in us even before reason is present the internal motion which desires (ὀρεγομένη) what is proper to itself."[22] In the second, VI.7(38).33.11, Plotinus explains that whenever soul desires the beautiful, "the soul desires (ὀρέγεται) without saying why it longs for this, whereas reason says this is the true Being."[23]

---

18 See *Rep*. 439dff and 588cff. I put irrational in scare quotes because there is debate about whether it is fitting to characterize the lowest ἐπιθυμίαι as completely bereft of reason.

19 IV.4(28).20.34.

20 IV.4(28).20.16–18. See *Plotinus, Ennead IV.3–4.29: Problems Concerning the Soul*, 382–383.

21 For Plotinus's claim that Intellect lacks ὄρεξις, see IV.7(2).13.6.

22 III.4(15).6.7.

23 Plotinus uses πόθος, longing, relatively infrequently, although within those uses including it often in lists of desiring words that he attributes to the soul, and not infrequently in contexts of sight and vision.

Plotinus's use of ἔρως occurs most notably in his discussion on this concept in III.5(50), although we find it elsewhere when he speaks of love for the Good, both in mythic terminology and in purely descriptive terms. Not surprisingly, this term often occurs in discussions of beauty, not only in III.5, but also, for example, in I.6(1): "For these are the states one should be in regarding something which is beautiful: astonishment, and sweet shock, and longing, and erotic thrill (ἔρωτα), and pleasurable excitement."[24] The connection between love and beauty is consistent through Plotinus's work. In I.3(20), *On Dialectic*, the lover, one who is drawn to absolute beauty, is at the second tier in the threefold progression toward virtue, which is achieved at the level of the philosopher. As an appreciator of beauty, the lover is thus someone who is predisposed to philosophy, and capable of making the ascent to true beauty.[25] The most remarkable instance in which Plotinus discusses love as belonging to a subject other than soul is at the beginning of VI.8(39).15, where he claims that "[The Good] is itself an object of love and love, that is, love of itself, inasmuch as it is only beautiful by reason of itself and in itself."[26] Plotinus's extended discussion of love in III.5(50) is remarkable not only in the fact that he provides the concept such extensive consideration, but that he aims both to provide a metaphysical account of love and to do so in profoundly mythic language, as will become clear below.

Plotinus, following Aristotle, uses βούλησις, wish, to connote an explicitly rational desire.[27] In its technical use the term refers to a rational intention, and although it is most often used to refer to acts of soul, Plotinus also uses it to refer to the One, or, in the case of II.1(40), to the will of god, βούλησις τοῦ θεοῦ.[28] In IV.4(28).12, he says that in the Universal Soul, will is thought, ἡ βούλησις φρόνησις. The most extensive use of this term occurs in I.4(46) and VI.8(39). In both cases, Plotinus discusses the role of βούλησις in the actions of a virtuous person, and generally seems to follow Aristotle's account of βούλησις as developed in *EN*, insofar as it is rational desire. This notion is integral in VI.8(39), Plotinus's account of wish and the voluntary, where he examines the relation of one's βούλησις to what is up to us, ἐφ᾽ ἡμίν. But Plotinus also uses the term to refer to wanting in a general, non-technical way. Perhaps surpris-

24 I.6(1).4.15–17.

25 On this point, see V.9(5).2.

26 VI.8(39).15.1–2.

27 For an extended discussion on the role of this term in Plotinus, see Eliasson, *The Notion*, especially ch. 6.2.

28 Referenced throughout II.1(40) and II.2(14).

ingly, I will not focus on this term in this investigation, for the following reason. In this study, I am interested in desire that is a basic, metaphysical connection between the Good and all things. This desire, as I hope will become clear, operates on a more fundamental level than even rational consideration, for βούλησις by and large indicates a rationally-defined, Good-directed desire that belongs to a specific mind. The desire in which I am interested is more basic than this. Thus, although a metaphysically basic desire for the Good might spark an act of wish, that initial desire is more basic, and that is the striving I will now begin to trace.

## 2 Desire in the General Structure of Reality

The main claim I wish to defend in this and the next three sections is that term ἔφεσις and its correlatives denote a special kind of desire within the Plotinian framework. This desire is metaphysical—it is part of the substance of things, and because it is metaphysical, it is also structural. Its metaphysical function also means that ἔφεσις expresses itself psychologically and noetically, as I will make clear below. This desire is that which makes Plotinus's model of desire an inherent model of desire. Since, as I will argue, it is born into the fabric of substance as such, it is a permanent feature and is connected to its object in kind. This function of ἔφεσις is borne out by Plotinus's recurrent and idiomatic usage of the term. By idiomatic, I mean that Plotunus uses desire (ἔφεσις) in unusual ways, ways that sometimes do not intuitively make sense if we understand desire purely as a psychological phenomenon. He will say, for example, that desire occurs on all levels of being and that desire can do things like drive Intellect and Soul into existence and encourage matter to seek unity. Of course, I will not maintain that Plotinus uses ἔφεσις *only* in the technical way I will outline in this chapter. Rather, I will argue that when Plotinus discusses desire in such a way that it has a *structural* function of being directed toward the Good de facto, without rational interference, he almost always uses the term ἔφεσις, and that if we examine the provenance and occurrence of this term, we find an original, systematic account of desire as an efficient cause on an overarching scale. Thus, I take ἔφεσις as a kind of guide along a path that reveals to us something basic to Plotinus's system.

I first want to offer five passages that show Plotinus discussing desire's role in a holistic way. It is perhaps easy to read the claims about desire in these passages as trite truisms. But lingering on them reveals the more radical implications of Plotinus's claims. I intend to show that they are expressions of fundamental features of Plotinus's metaphysical landscape. To begin, let me offer

the context and full quotation of the text that began this chapter, from treatise I.7 *On the Primary Good and on the Other Goods*, the 54th and chronologically last of Plotinus's corpus. He discusses in the first chapter the relation of all things to the Good.

> Other things which have the Good like this, have it in two ways, by assimilating themselves to it, and by directing their activity towards it. If, then, desire (ἔφεσις) and activity towards that which is best is good, the Good must not look to something else nor be desirous of something else, but be in tranquillity, 'the spring and source of activities' according to nature, and make other things Good-like not by an activity in relation to them, for it is they that are active in relation to it. It is not due to activity or thinking that it is the Good, but by remaining in itself. And because it transcends Substantiality, it also transcends activity and transcends Intellect and thinking. For, once more, we must posit the Good to be that upon which all things depend, whereas it depends on nothing. For in this way it is true that it is 'that which all things desire (ἐφίεται)'[29]

Although this is a well-known passage, the relational nature of activity is not something I have seen discussed in the literature. While it is commonplace within Neoplatonic metaphysics that things strive toward their cause, activity as such is, at least on a basic Aristotelian understanding of ἐνέργεια (e.g. as opposed to κίνησις), self-directed and complete at every moment. Even within the double activity model, something's activity produces another similar but inferior version of itself—the relation between the two substances is a relation only after the fact, as it were.[30] But in this passage, we are told that things, all things, are active in relation to the Good (ἐκεῖνα γὰρ πρὸς αὐτήν), such that activity as such is Good directed. Substances undertake this relation by directing their activity to the Good and by assimilating to it, and desire is the indication of this relation. We read in the collection of remarks in III.9(13) of this relational comportment further: "The first is not related to anything, but the others are related to it, stable as they rest around it, and in motion, too. For motion is desire (ἔφεσις) and the first has no desires. For what desire could the most lofty thing have?"[31] Plotinus clearly has in mind an expansive definition of motion, for he refers to the Motion and Rest in Intellect, referring to two

29 I.7(54).1.13–24.

30 For a recent and concise discussion of double activity, see Emilsson, *Plotinus*, 48–57. For a more extensive discussion of double activity, see Emilsson, *Plotinus on Intellect*, 22–68.

31 III.9(13).9.3–5.

members of the *megista genē* fundamentally constitutive of Intellect. But his claim that motion is desire, if motion is understood in an expansive way, readily has implications for the movement and function of the things that come *after* Intellect, or the intelligibles that Intellect in combination with Motion generates.

According to Plotinus, the very presence of desire further indicates that there is a good at all (although the desire does not determine its goodness). In an extended discussion in which Plotinus works toward defining the Good, he argues that the Good itself, although not entirely overlapping with the pleasant, always contains some measure of joy.[32] He summarizes his conclusion in the following way: "The Good, then, must be such as to be desired (ἐφετόν) not so that it becomes good by being desired, but rather by being good it becomes desired."[33] We find another mention of the connection between beings and desire in I.8(51), in Plotinus's discussion of evil. To facilitate this discussion, Plotinus must distinguish goodness as a distinct concept. In doing so, he again has recourse to the claim that all things desire goodness, explicating that relationship further. "The Good is that upon which all beings depend and that 'which all beings desire (ἐφίεται)'; they have it as their principle and are also in need of it."[34] Plotinus's continued use of Aristotle's ethical claim that all things, πάντα, desire the Good is, as yet, without discrete content. But in other places, we find universal claims regarding desire's presence in all things complemented with enumeration of the things Plotinus intends when he says, "all things." At the beginning of the *Großschrift*, Plotinus claims of desire and contemplation, θεωρία, that "All things (πάντα) desire (ἐφίεσθαι) contemplation and look to this goal, not only rational but also non-rational animals (ἄλογα ζῷα) and nature in plants and the earth which produces them."[35] It is beyond the bounds of this chapter to undertake an analysis of what Plotinus is up to in this treatise. For our purposes, it is enough to highlight that in this instance of πάντα, Plotinus explicitly includes non-rational animals, nature, and earth. Further, we find an analogous account of the reach of desire in the first of Plotinus's treatises on providence, where he has the cosmos speak for itself in accounting for the apparent imperfection of its constituents. Here, we find that Plotinus considers the cosmos itself to be full of desire, presumably due to the presence of the world soul.

32 VI.7(38).25.6–11.
33 VI.7(38).25.16–18.
34 I.8(51).2.2–4.
35 III.8(30).1.3–5.

> Everything (πάντα) in me desires (ἐφίεται) the Good and each thing attains it in proportion to its own power. For the whole heaven depends on the Good, as does my entire soul and the gods in my parts; and every animal and plant and anything that appears to be soulless are within me.[36]

With this passage, we see the analogous use of contemplation and the Good in the last two passages (in fact, one might wonder whether the III.8(30) passage parodies the Aristotelian refrain). Regardless, here in III.2(47), Plotinus again reiterates that the desire for the Good extends to animals, plants, and even soulless things. Thus, when Plotinus makes the claim that all things desire the Good, we have good reason to understand this claim as broadly as possible. In addition to these general ascriptions of desire to all things and the cosmos at large, desire plays a key role in many of Plotinus's discussions about the individual hypostases.

## 3 Desire in Intellect

Let us now turn to examine desire in the discrete parts of Plotinus's system. We will begin with νοῦς, and νοῦς begins with desire. For, as I will argue, we find that desire is an efficient cause both in its generation and in its continued activity, for the desire that Plotinus attributes to Intellect has a metaphysical, substantial function as the ground for Intellect's generation and continued activity. This function establishes the inherent presence of desire within this hypostasis. Let us first look at the key passages in which we find discussion of Intellect's generation.[37] First, Plotinus describes in V.3(49).11 the way in which Intellect attempts to think that which is beyond it, and includes in his discussion the various aspects of Intellect involved both in thinking as such and in Intellect's attempt to think the Good.

---

36 III.2(47).3.33–35. On ἔφεσις in the sensible universe, see also III.7(45).4.29–33: "The sensible universe, too, has need of a goal at which it will aim in the same way. For this reason, it hastens to what it is going to be and does not want to stand still as it drags its existence along in its effort to be constantly producing something different and going round in a circle in a desire (ἐφέσει) for Substantiality."

37 This point has been well discussed in the literature. See, for example, Rist, "The Indefinite Dyad," 99–105; Bussanich, *The One and its Relation*; Emilsson, *Plotinus on Intellect*, 69–77; and Emilsson, *Plotinus*, 37–69. Further, as is well known, discussions of Intellect's generation do not refer to or assume its actual generation in time, nor do I intend anything of the sort here. These discussions deal rather with conceptual priority and necessity, and should be read as such.

> For this reason, this Intellect, which is multiple, whenever it wants to think that which is transcendent, thinks it as one, but, wanting to attain it in its simplicity, ends up always grasping something else pluralized in itself. As a result, it impelled (ὥρμησε) itself towards it not as Intellect, but as sight that is not yet seeing, and when it stopped, it possessed what it itself had pluralized, so that whereas it longed for (ἐπεθύμησεν) something else having in an undefined way something like a semblance, when it stopped it grasped something else in itself, making it multiple. For, in addition, it has an impression of that which is seen; otherwise, it would not have permitted it to come to be in itself. But this became a multiple from a one, and in this way, in cognizing it, it knew itself, and then it became sight that sees. This is already Intellect when it has it, and it has it as Intellect. Prior to this, it was only desire (ἔφεσις) and a sight that is without an impression. This Intellect, then, attained it, but when it grasped it, it became Intellect, always in need, and when it thought, it became Intellect and Substance and intellection; prior to this, there was no intellection since it did not have an intelligible, nor was it Intellect since it was not yet thinking.[38]

This passage provides a (relatively) concise overview of the generation of Intellect as a fully-fledged, thinking substance. I would like to highlight that Intellect desired to attain to the Good in its inchoate form, even being only this desire, ἔφεσις, before it thought the image of the Good. Plotinus uses a variegated vocabulary here to identify nevertheless the same basic point that Intellect wants the Good. However, when he identifies Intellect as a particular substance in its non-substantial form—that is to say, when he discusses the metaphysical reality of what inchoate intellect is—he calls it ἔφεσις, which he elaborates as a kind of sight. It is also important to highlight that here he says Intellect was desire *alone*, ἔφεσις μόνον, not that Intellect was desire [then], with an implication that Intellect [now] is no longer desire. Rather, a better way of reading this passage is as an account of the growing complexity of Intellect's desire, which develops along with Intellect's capacity to think. Supportive of this interpretation is Plotinus's claim that, once inchoate intellect becomes substantial Intellect, it is always in need, frequently a concurrent condition of desiring anything in the first place.

Although in the passage from V.3(49) desire is clearly a crucial step in Intellect's development, it does not specify to what extent desire remains within

38 V.3(49).11.1–16.

Intellect once Intellect itself is substantially active. In regard to the continuous presence of desire in Intellect, one finds elsewhere that Plotinus defines intellectual activity in such a way that intellection itself runs on the motor of desire.

> The Good has bestowed its trace upon Intellect to have by seeing it, so that whereas in Intellect there is desire (ἔφεσις) and it both desires (ἐφιέμενος) and attains forever, the Good neither desires—what would it desire?—nor attains, for it did not even desire. So, it isn't even Intellect. For in Intellect there is desire and convergence with its form.[39]

The point of the passage is to distinguish Intellect from the Good in an effort to say something about the nature of the Good itself, but we can glean two points relevant to our discussion. First, Plotinus clearly attributes desire to intellect eternally (ἀεί). Second, Intellect is always attaining the *trace*, ἴχνος, of the Good, which Plotinus loosely identifies here with form.[40] This attainment of the trace, a likeness of the Good but not the Good that Intellect originally desires, is analogous to what we read in V.3(49).11. In his discussion of the relation between thinking, Intellect, and the Good in V.6(24), Plotinus further highlights the way in which desire realizes Intellect's thinking of the Good. He explains as follows:

> And this is intellection: motion towards the Good that it desires (ἐφιέμενον). For the desire (ἔφεσις) generated (ἐγέννησε) the intellection and caused it to exist with itself. For desire for seeing is sight. The Good itself, then, needs to think nothing, for the Good is not other than itself. And since whenever that which is other than the Good thinks it, it thinks it by being Good-like, that is, having a likeness in relation to the Good, and thinks it as the Good and as desirable (ἐφετόν) to itself, and in a way having an image of the Good.[41]

The identity of desire and inchoate intellect is somehow even stronger in this passage, since Plotinus says that desire actually generates intellection in the first place, the same intellection that marks the beginning of substantial Intellect. Again, we find mention of a relation of intellection to the Good, this time as explication of what it means to be Good-like, ἀγαθοειδές. Being Good-like

39 III.8(30).11.21–24.

40 Emilsson lucidly addresses this point in his *Plotinus on Intellect*, 76–78.

41 V.6(24).5.9.–16.

(something I will discuss in detail below) coincides with thinking the Good as desirable, ἐφετόν, and with having a certain kind of relation to the Good like that in I.7(54). Plotinus here again uses the metaphor of seeing to illuminate what he is trying to communicate about the realization of Intellect through desire, both by discussing the nature of seeing, and by again claiming that intellection has an image of the Good, analogous to the impression Intellect has in V.3(49).

The aspect of unlimitedness has cropped up already in this examination, and the nature of the One beyond Intellect makes that aspect at once unsurprising and important. Seeing and unlimitedness are often connected in Plotinus's descriptions of inchoate intellect, although we see this connection elsewhere. In III.8(30) he explains the nature of inchoate intellect as a potency come into actuality.

> Since Intellect is a kind of sight and a sight that is seeing, it will be [like] a potency which is actualized. So, there will be its matter and its form, though matter here is intelligible. Besides, actual seeing, too, is twofold; before seeing it was one; then, the one became two and the two one.[42]

The sight of Intellect is here described as a potency, δύναμις, which comes to actuality, εἰς ἐνέργειαν. Plotinus here uses the definition of vision that Aristotle uses to account for sight in *DA* III.2–3. Plotinus says Intellect is a kind of sight (ὄψις τις) and a seeing sight (ὄψις ὁρῶσα), in addition to its transition from potency to actuality. Aristotle describes sight with the same terminology also in terms of potency and actuality: that seeing is the actuality of sight (ὅρασις γὰρ λέγεται ἡ τῆς ὄψεως ἐνέργεια), and that sight and seeing are paradigms of potency and actuality in perception (αἴσθησις μὲν γὰρ ἤτοι δύναμις ἢ ἐνέργεια, οἷον ὄψις καὶ ὅρασις).[43] Thus Plotinus makes Intellect into a power that, as we have seen, in its desire for the Good, actualizes itself into substantial being. This close connection between a desiring power and substance or selfhood is the ground of the inherent model of desire that we will see echoed throughout this book, explicitly in the thought of Ibn Ṭufayl. But the central role of powers in general runs throughout the philosophical tradition in the Islamic world, a tradition that translated and then extensively utilized Aristotle's account of psychological powers. Beyond Plotinus's own transformation of these concepts, we will see that the Arabic translations of the *DA* work differently in accounting for desire within power psychology, and that both Ibn Bāǧǧa and Ibn Ṭufayl use

42 III.8(30).11.1–5.

43 *DA* 426a13–14 and 428a6–7, respectively.

versions of potency and actuality to account for the desire for perfection. Even though the notion of potency and actuality are straightforwardly Aristotelian, Plotinus's use of them is not—in the latter's account, Intellect's desire is not a power among other powers that it uses. Rather, the desire *is* the power that actualizes into Intellect per se.

The way in which Intellect is actualized and perfected is explained further in V.4(7).2.5–7. There Plotinus says that "intellection sees the intelligible and turns towards it and is in a way perfected by this; it is itself indefinite like sight, and made definite by the intelligible." Considering this passage in light of what we just read from V.6(24).5, we start to see an even closer connection between intellection (νόησις) and desire (ἔφεσις), insofar as desire itself is described as being like sight that searches for its object, like a desire to see something in the dark. This analysis is echoed in VI.7(38), where Plotinus discusses the nature of inchoate intellect's vision:

> But looking at the Good it was not yet Intellect; it looked non-intellectually. In fact, we should assert that Intellect was never seeing the Good; rather, it was living relative to it; it was dependent on it, and was turned towards it.[44]

Plotinus describes the pre-noetic attempt to see the Good as something occurring non-intellectually, ἀνοήτως. This something, whatever the sight before Intellect is, the sight I argue is identical with the desire for the Good, is not yet intellectual in nature, but rather takes on this nature as it obtains what it can of its object.

Above I laid the groundwork for an interpretation of V.3(49).11 on which this description of inchoate intellect is actually a description of desire's development into Intellect, instead of, e.g., a description of Intellect's intellectual regulation of desire. The difference between these two positions is subtle, but, I think, profound. It rests on the questions of metaphysical priority, efficient causality, and the source of Intellect's determination, three separate but deeply important issues. It seems to me incontrovertible that desire (ἔφεσις) is metaphysically prior to Intellect properly speaking, even if one takes Plotinus's discussion of the issue as a kind of logical fiction, a necessary step if we acknowledge Intellect's eternality.[45] Similarly, I think it is clear that desire is the cause of intellectual activity.

---

44 VI.7(38).16.14–17.

45 Borrowing the term from Gerson, see Gerson, *Plotinus*, 46.

The defining feature of Intellect's determination is the issue on which I want to linger. By "defining feature," I mean the force that makes Intellect into the kind of substance it is, and thus whatever is responsible for the fact that Intellect's intelligibles came out the way that they did. The definer of Intellect is the One, and we need to keep separate here two concepts: first, the definer of Intellect, which is the One in virtue of its being the object of desire that gives traces of itself to be obtained; and second, the defining agent that *reaches out for* and *reacts* to the One, that, in its movement toward the One, outlines and actualizes what Intellect will become and what it therefore forever is. We read above in V.6(24).5 that desire generates intellection, in III.8(30).11 that intellect is a potency come into actuality. From the above passages, it is clear that desire is this second element, an element that determines and constitutes the very structure of Intellect. In its attempt to grasp the completely simple One, it tears itself into many ones, unifying them in the intellection of these intelligibles and becoming the substance of Intellect. As I have mentioned, it is tempting to interpret the development of Intellect as a story of desire regulation, of the way in which desire is bound by Intellect somehow. But, based on the function desire plays in Intellect's development and generation, it is more accurate to understand the development of Intellect such that desire is what directs Intellect's specification, not the other way around. Desire is not bound, but binds itself.

Further, if we accept Plotinus's identification of inchoate Intellect as desire, we can settle more satisfactorily difficulties that arise when explaining why Intellect generates in the first place. Emilsson addresses two such difficulties in his examination of inchoate Intellect, namely, for what reason the conversion of inchoate intellect occurs and on what grounds Plotinus is entitled to attribute desire to this inchoate intellect, and I want to show that accepting desire as the proto-substance of Intellect resolves both of these problems. First, Emilsson rightly explains that the One's emanation alone does not account for Intellect's conversion, and thus he invokes Intellect's nature as a knower to account for its conversion: as an ultimately knowing substance, Intellect will have a desire to "possess the Good by knowing it."[46] Since this explanation requires that desire is in inchoate intellect, Emilsson raises the second problem: on what grounds is Plotinus entitled to say inchoate intellect desires at all. Specifically, the imagined objection goes, the desire to know that Emilsson used as an explanation for conversion entails that inchoate intellect must be much more sophisticated than Plotinus presents it. Emilsson's explanation has recourse to the indefinite nature of the image Intellect

46 Emilsson, *Plotinus on Intellect*, 73.

has of the One, and he rightly distinguishes between desire for conceptualization and another kind of desire that is not fully articulated.[47] This latter, unarticulated desire is the sort of desire Plotinus might have recourse to in response to the imagined objection. Acknowledging an identity between the proto-substance of Intellect and desire resolves both of these problems. Conversion happens because what emanates from the One is desire for the One that overflowed, so that the desire, as it were, never needs to look back: it always has the vague image of the One because the proto-substance is never not looking for the One—the One defines it already, and this desire for the One or the Good is connected to its object in kind from the very beginning. Thus, as soon as the One has emanated the desiring inchoate intellect, this proto-substance is already looking back to it. It is because inchoate intellect fails to obtain the One in its simplicity that it becomes Intellect defined. Emilsson concludes similarly on the grounds that there is no temporal progression in Intellect's so-called generation, so that we need not worry about identifying a moment at which there is a subject alone with no object.[48] But allowing that this subject is desire more fully explains why, as Emilsson metaphorically puts it, "intellect, as it were, backs out" away from the One. It also prevents one from making the mistake of reducing all aspects Intellect to formal thinking: even though this thinking is Intellect's dominant activity, Plotinus, as I will highlight later, does not think it is its only, or even most primary, one.

## 4 Desire in Soul

Turning to examine the role of desire in the makeup of soul, things are not so straightforward. A few of the difficulties one faces when discussing soul in Plotinus's thought are the morally ambivalent descent of soul; the many types or expressions of soul; and, specific to this discussion, the fact that soul's desire for goodness or the Good has an intermediate or alternative goal, Intellect. Nevertheless, desire does play a crucial role in Soul's generation and self-distinction from Intellect, and although Plotinus sometimes speaks of soul's descent from Intellect as audacious, I want to distinguish the Good-directed desire in which I am interested from this impulse downward.[49] Plotinus discusses desire, ἔφε-

47 Emilsson, 73–74.

48 Emilsson, 74.

49 See, for instance, the beginning of V.1(10). On the notion of τόλμα in Plotinus, see Phillips, *Order from Disorder*, 121–123; and De Blassi, "Considerations on the Concept of Audacity."

σις, as the striving force *toward* the Good explicitly in soul as well, defining the motion that constitutes the soul's relation to the Good as circular. We read in IV.4(28):

> Now if someone were to put the Good in the centre, he would put Intellect in the place of a circle that is not moved, but Soul in that of a circle that is moved, but moved by desire (ἐφέσει). For Intellect has immediate possession of what it wants and encompasses it, whereas Soul desires what transcends Being.[50]

In this passage we find another iteration of Plotinus's claim at the end of III.8(30) that Intellect has and somehow encompasses what it wants, namely, the Good or the intelligibles, which are traces or individual instantiations of the Good. However, here Soul is included, also desiring the Good ("what transcends being") but, given its metaphysical distance, as it were, from the Good, it moves in its effort to attain what it does not have. Given that there are many different expressions of soul, one might wonder which souls Plotinus has in mind here. Could he mean that a soul like the so-called lower soul could really have a desire for the Good? Later in III.5(50), we find, among many other helpful clarifications, that Plotinus does intend to include the lower soul in the desire for the Good. There, one reads, "For every soul desires the Good, both the mixed soul and the soul of the individual, since it follows on from and is derived from the higher soul."[51] The claim that the mixed or individual soul desires the Good because its source desires the Good, is merely an extension of the principle that soul desires the Good because Intellect does so.

Elsewhere in this treatise on Love, Plotinus further characterizes this desire in terms identical to those he uses to describe Intellect's inchoate desire.

> Poverty shared in the nature of the intelligible world, not in an image of the intelligible or in a reflection of it, but by being there and mingling with it and giving birth to the real existent which is Love made of form and indefiniteness (ἀοριστίας); this [indefiniteness] the soul had before it encountered the Good, yet could divine something of it present in the guise of an indefinite (ἀόριστον) and limitless (ἄπειρον) semblance.[52]

50 IV.4(28).16.24–28.

51 III.5(50).3.37.

52 III.5(50).7.4–8, slightly altered. Taking the ἥν here to refer to the ἀοριστίας immediately preceding it.

The description of Love being generated out of indefiniteness and a limitless or vague semblance is strongly reminiscent of the description of inchoate intellect's indefinite vision by means of which it got hold of a vague picture of the One in V.3(49). Plotinus later not only connects Love to Soul's desire, ἔφεσις, but explains that Love is generated out of this desire. He does so by specifying that Love has existed always and necessarily owing to Soul's desire to attain the good. Thus we read later that Love exists with Soul always and necessarily: "Love has of necessity always existed as a result of Soul's desire (ἐκ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐφέσεως) to attain what is superior and good, and he was always there ever since Soul, too, existed."[53] In his further explanation of Love's constitution, Plotinus explains the role of Poverty and Plenty, or matter and form, in Love's formation. Love itself comes about as Soul's desire for the Good.

> And this is why he is said to be born from Plenty and Poverty in that deficiency and desire (ἔφεσις) and the memory of the expressed principles come together and generate in soul the activity directed towards the Good and this activity is love (ἔρωτα).[54]

Plotinus then identifies Poverty as matter, saying

> And his mother is Poverty because desire (ἔφεσις) always belongs to what is in need. And Poverty is matter because matter is in need in every respect and the indefinite aspect of the desire (ἐπιθυμίας) for the Good—for there is neither form nor expressed principle in that which desires this—makes what desires (τὸ ἐφιέμενον) even more akin to matter insofar as it desires.[55]

Plotinus earlier in section 9 identified Plenty as the formal principle of soul: "Plenty, then, since he is the expressed principle of what is in the intelligible and in Intellect and is more diffused and, in a way, unfolded than they are, could be said to be around Soul and in Soul."[56] Plotinus then concludes the treatise by claiming that "And so then Love is a material entity and he is a daemon born from soul insofar as soul lacks the Good but desires it."[57] Dimitri Vasilakis argued that Love is the reality of soul's relation to the Intellect, effected by soul's desire for the Good. He summarizes succinctly as follows: "Eros represents

53 III.5(50).9.40–42.
54 III.5(50).9.46–49.
55 III.5(50).9.49–54.
56 III.5(50).9.1–3.
57 III.5(50).9.55–57.

*Soul's own* activity towards the intelligible," and Eros, as this activity, expresses "Soul's discursive apprehension of Nous, in the way that inchoate Nous erotically reverts upon the One and constitutes itself as the proper Hypostasis of Nous."[58] I believe that Vasilakis is correct in his appraisal, and that, given the passages I have just examined, one can conclude that (1) Love is generated from, or is an expression of, the more basic desire for the Good that Plotinus denotes in this discussion as elsewhere with the term ἔφεσις, and (2) Soul always has this desire, ἔφεσις, for the Good, that it expresses through the activity Plotinus calls Love.

Another difficulty in determining the role of soul's desire for the Good is the proliferation of terms for those things that are given from the Good. Beauty is the one perhaps most commonly connected to soul's desiring, a clear inheritance from Platonic tradition. Plotinus connects beauty and goodness readily. In his treatise on beauty, he says, "We must, then, ascend to the Good, which every soul desires (ὀρέγεται). If someone, then, has seen it, he knows what I mean when I say how beautiful it is. For it is desired (ἐφετόν) as good, and the desire (ἔφεσις) is directed to it as this."[59] The Good is desired *as good*, for, although it can loosely be described otherwise, it is an object of desire because of its goodness. Even in cases in which beauty is an object of desire, this beauty ultimately comes from the Good, which bestows beauty onto Intellect.

> But we say that that which transcends Intellect is the Idea of the Good, a nature that holds Beauty in front of itself. So, roughly speaking, the Good is the primary Beauty. But if one distinguishes the intelligibles apart, one will say that the 'place' of the Forms is intelligible Beauty, whereas the Good transcends that and is the 'source and principle' of Beauty.[60]

Thus, when souls or individuals desire beauty or beautiful things, ultimately they desire the Good or goodness from which beauty comes (however misguided their desire for beauty may be at any given moment).

In a famous passage from V.5(32), we find a rich example of Plotinus's variegated terminology of desire, and in this passage he connects the various sorts of desire to an innate desire (ἔφεσις), to the birth of love (ἔρως) at the sight of beauty, and to the Good. First, he explains the way in which desire is present in all people, regardless of whether they are aware of it.

---

58 Vasilakis, "Love and Myth in Plotinus' *Enneads* III.5" *Diotima* 45 (2015): 73.

59 I.6(1).7.1–4.

60 I.6(1).9.39–43.

> It is also necessary to consider how people have forgotten what they originally desired, and even now long for (ποθοῦσι) and desire (ἐφίενται). For all things desire (ὀρέγεται) and pursue (ἐφίεται) that by a necessity of nature, as if they had divined that without which they are not able to exist. And the apprehension of that which is beautiful is there already for those who, in a way, know it and have wakened to it, and so, too, the amazement, the awakening of love. But the Good, inasmuch as it was present of old to an innate desire (ἔφεσιν σύμφυτον), and is also present to those who are asleep, does not amaze those who sometimes see it, because it is always with them and there is never a recollection of it.[61]

There is a smattering of terms in this passage, and Plotinus includes the Aristotelian refrain I highlighted at the beginning of this chapter, while the desire which is innate and to which he gives priority is ἔφεσις. Especially germane to this study is his characterization of ἔφεσις as σύμφυτον, attributing to souls the inherent desire that was clearly in Intellect. As I highlighted above in the discussion of terminology, the desire denoted by ὄρεξις is proper to soul alone, but, like ἔφεσις, is largely Good directed. Of Plotinus's descriptions of soul's generation, one in particular explains that it is on account of the desire (ὄρεξις) that the soul has that the soul both proceeds from Intellect and produces something of its own.

> Whatever is intellect alone remains eternally incapable of being affected there among the intelligibles, enjoying a life that is solely intellectual—for there is in it no element of impulse (ὁρμή) or desire (ὄρεξις)—whereas if that which follows immediately upon that intellect takes on desire, by the addition of that desire it in a way proceeds already a stage further, striving to impose order on the model of what it has seen in Intellect, as if pregnant from that source and straining to beget, it is eager to produce something, that is, to create.[62]

Ὄρεξις here is not merely a synonym for the desire soul has at its generation. We already saw that Soul's generation is analogous to Intellect's, and that desire (ἔφεσις) actualizes Soul in a similar manner to Intellect's actualization. But here, ὄρεξις is needed as an additional expression of desire by which Plotinus

61 V.5(32).12.6–13. On this point, see also VI.7(38).31.17–24.

62 IV.7(2).13.3–8.

accounts for Soul's exploration outside of Intellect. Further, the facts both that soul is a desiring substance on a fundamental level, and that its desire for the Good is of such a sort as to be undefined, allow Plotinus to offer his theory of human experience, which is marked by the desire for a specific but undefined object.

## 5 Desire in Judgments and Action

We also find several passages in which desire (ἔφεσις) is responsible for judgments and actions. In these passages, the basic desire functional at the structural foundation of Soul is also at work in the basic good-directed activities of the human being, i.e. judgments and action. I begin with the former. We have already read in v.6(24) that intellection fundamentally rests on desire, ἔφεσις: "And this is intellection: motion towards the Good that it desires (ἐφιέμενον). For the desire (ἔφεσις) generated the intellection and caused it to exist with itself."[63] It is now clear that this claim echoes one I examined at the beginning of the chapter, that "motion is desire (ἔφεσις) and the first has no desires."[64] In addition, Plotinus sets soul's *judgment* of right and wrong within the framework of its desire of Intellect. The initial claim is put forth by Plotinus in the form of an objection, some of which he accepts and some of which he modifies. The objection is the following.

> But, then, someone will say, why do we not stop at Intellect and postulate this as the Good? For both soul and life are traces of Intellect, and soul desires (ἐφίεται) it. Soul judges (κρίνει) and thereby desires Intellect, judging justice better than injustice, and putting every form of excellence before every form of vice, and it honours the identical things it chooses. But if it desires only Intellect, it would presumably need more argument to show that Intellect is not the ultimate thing; and while not everything desires Intellect, everything desires the Good.[65]

Plotinus's retort is that *all* things desire the Good, even though judging, κρίνειν, is an expression of soul's desire for Intellect, its intermediary between it and the Good, as discussed above. This retort is only part of a lengthy discussion about whether the Good is the ultimate cause beyond Intellect. It continues:

63 v.6(24).5.9–10.
64 iii.9(13).9.4.
65 vi.7(38).20.12–18.

> And even among things without intellect, not all try to come to possess it, and those who do have it do not stop there, but go on to look for the Good; they look for Intellect on the basis of calculative reasoning (ἐκ λογισμοῦ), whereas they look for the Good prior to reason as well. But if they desire (ἐφίεται) life and eternal existence and activity, then the object desired (τὸ ἐφετόν) is not desired as Intellect, but as Good, as deriving from the Good and leading to the Good; for that is the way life is.[66]

Plotinus here expounds on the argument he begins in the penultimate quote. Since there are things that do not desire Intellect, and since the things that do desire it, desire to move beyond Intellect, we are entitled to posit something beyond Intellect, which Plotinus calls the Good. Further, Plotinus makes clear that even those things that *do* desire Intellect as the home of life and activity, desire it not as Intellect, ᾗ νοῦς, but as Good, ᾗ ἀγαθόν. This account shows that desire is active in instances of κρίνειν and λογισμός, which functions either as an expression or tool for seeking the Good. The basic, grounding functionality of desire in these instances also goes hand in hand with Plotinus's claims that motion is desire, and that intellection, νόησις, is motion towards the Good.

It is surely unsurprising that Plotinus also discusses actions in terms of *desire*, but I want to highlight that he also discusses actions in terms of desire for the *Good* using the same terminology he uses in his descriptions of the generation of Intellect and Soul. Throughout his discussion of contemplation in III.8(30), Plotinus explicates actions as weak attempts at contemplation that occur when the agents are unable to contemplate.[67]

> Human beings, too, when they are weak in contemplation, produce action as a shadow of contemplation and reason. For their faculty of contemplation is not adequate for them due to weakness of soul, and being unable to grasp adequately the object of their vision and because of this not being filled [by it], yet still desirous (ἐφιέμενοι) of seeing it, they are carried towards action so that they can see [with their eyes] what they cannot see with their intellect.[68]

---

66 VI.7(38).20.19–end.

67 On the deeply cognitive nature of Plotinus's world, see Chiaradonna, "Plotinus' Account," 192, where he argues that for Plotinus even sense perception is cognitive: "By equating sense perception with a judgement (krisis), Plotinus suggests that sense perception is a (low level) kind of cognition that involves an active power of the soul, and that this should be distinguished from a merely passive affection of the soul."

68 III.8(30).4.31–37. See also III.8(30).1.11–18 and III.8(30).6.4–9.

On this model, action is an imitation of the contemplation that would more truly attain the goal the individual agent inevitably desires. Before connecting this desire to its object, Plotinus summarizes the model of action and contemplation in relation to the causal hierarchy within which desire functions.[69]

> That actions, too, have their goal in knowing and their desire (ἔφεσις) is for knowing and that what is produced from contemplation has its goal in a further form and object of contemplation; that, in general, each thing is an imitation of what produced it and produces [further] objects of contemplation and forms, and the beings that come to exist, being imitations of Beings, reveal that their producers have as their goal not acts of production and actions, but the finished product in order to contemplate it; that both acts of discursive reason (διανοήσεις) and even before them acts of sense-perception (αἰσθήσεις), whose aim is to know, want (θέλουσι) to look upon this; and that before these, nature produces the object of contemplation and an expressed principle in itself, perfecting another expressed principle, all this is, I think, clear, some of it is self-evident, and some again our account has brought back to mind.[70]

Added here are two points worth highlighting. First, the explanation that each thing imitates its cause, and second, that discursive reason and even sense-perception mimic the desire for knowing, of which action is also an expression: "This, then, too, is clear, namely, that when the primary Beings are engaged in contemplation everything else (τὰ ἄλλα πάντα), too, of necessity desires (ἐφίεσθαι) this, if indeed for all things their starting point is their goal."[71] The desire and various imitations of contemplation that occur throughout the world all go back to the original contemplation—and desire—of the intelligibles, which, as it is now clear, is for the Good. Toward the end of the treatise, which I have already examined above, Plotinus explicates the contemplation of intelligibles as effected by desire (ἔφεσις) for the Good, the trace of which Intellect attains. It is now clear that the various lower levels of action function analogously to the intellection born of desire in Intellect, and are imitations of contemplation—the act by which Intellect can attain to some degree the object of its desire.

In fact, Plotinus uses this account of action even as an error theory, and in his explanation of bad action in his account of providence, he claims the following: "Human injustices against each other, however, might have as their cause the

69 On causation in action, see Remes, "Human Action and Divine Power," 38–60.

70 III.8(30).7.5–17.

71 III.8(30).7.15–18.

desire for the Good (ἔφεσιν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ), when through their inability to attain it, human beings turn against other human beings."[72] Within this error theory, Plotinus concisely restates his claim that human action goes back to the desire for the Good, even when this desire is thwarted. This account is to some extent a restatement of the idea found in V.5(32).12 and VI.7(38).31 that human beings have an inborn desire for the Good.

Even the body and to some extent matter have reflections of this desire, ἔφεσις, for higher principles, either as a desire for unity or a desire for what is better. I will not linger on this point, for Plotinus does not say much about it, but what he does say is rather striking. First, in his discussion of the body and its delicate unity in IV.4(28).18, Plotinus explains pleasure and pain in terms of unity. He claims that since the unity proper to body (as a composite of matter and form) is not an ineradicable part of its being or substantiality, an insecurity results, and maintenance of or threat to this unity is what we call pleasure and pain.

> When one nature wants to share something with another, that is, a thing of another kind—and the worse takes something from the better (τοῦ κρείττονος), and that cannot take the better itself, but only some trace (ἴχνος) of it, and in this way, too, it comes to be both two things and one, stuck between what it was originally and what it could not have—it generates a problem for itself, since it has acquired a transitory association which is not secure, but always borne in opposite directions. And as it fluctuates upwards and downwards, on its being borne down it proclaims its pain, and as it moves up its desire (ἔφεσιν) for the association.[73]

In this passage, the worse part, the body so qualified (σῶμα τοιόνδε), takes from the soul a trace of it that affords this body a functioning unity.[74] The soul is the better, itself an echo of the ultimate unity and goodness of the One. The notion of trace is also telling, since Plotinus uses this concept also in the case of Intellect, which receives a trace of the Good. Thus, here too Plotinus utilizes the structure by which he accounts for the desire, ἔφεσις, for the Good on other levels of reality in general and in the human sphere in particular. He employs similar language in his other extended discussion of affectivity in III.6(26). There he attributes desire to matter in his description of the latter's nature.

---

72 III.2(47).4.21–23.

73 IV.4(28).18.28–36.

74 Christopher Noble has written extensively on this issue, see his "How Plotinus's Soul Animates His Body," and "Plotinus' Unaffectable Soul."

> But since [matter] falls outside all of these, it would not even correctly receive the attribution of being; rather, it would more appropriately be termed non-being, not in the sense that motion is non-being or rest is non-being, but true non-being, an image or semblance of mass, a desire for real existence (ὑποστάσεως ἔφεσις), something static but not stable.[75]

In its state of non-being, matter desires to be real, and even in this minimal state of being, matter's desire is for a reality that is higher, and therefore better, than its own. This passage also directly incorporates Aristotle's above-mentioned discussion of matter found in *Phys*. 192a18–20. Both passages explain desire along the same structural framework that Plotinus uses much more extensively in the cases of Intellect and Soul. Both instances of the attribution of this desire to body or matter occur within discussions of the problem of affectivity, and one might wonder for what reason this happens, as well as on what grounds Plotinus would attribute such a desire to a body or matter in the first place. In addition to the Aristotelian influence, by claiming that qualified body or even matter desire something better, Plotinus offers an explanation of why the generation of bodies is not simply bad. To what extent matter (and, by extension, the body) is purely evil concerns Plotinus greatly, and he took pains to articulate a position in which the Good's status as the ultimate agent is not threatened.[76] In acknowledging an upward-facing metaphysical reason for matter and body's union with soul, namely desire for the better or for being, he explains in what way the union of body and soul may be good, insofar as body and matter are bettered by the union and indeed genuinely want to be good, i.e. to be better.

Desire, ἔφεσις, for the Good functions consistently at all levels of his system. Within Intellect, desire is the driving force behind and material for Intellect's substantial being, the potency for the activity that constitutes Intellect's substantiality. Desire, in a way, simply is what it means to intellect, and the activity of judgment is at the same time an activity of desire. Soul, too, stems from desire, a reflection and extension of the same desire that Intellect has for the Good. Plotinus identifies love as the activity of soul that is directed at and related to Intellect, and this love and desire is present in all things, in all human beings, consciously or not. Further, human judgment and action, even *wrong* action, are expressions of the desire for the Good. This desire Plotinus attributes also to qualified body and to matter, so that there appears to be no part of reality in which this basic, structural desire is not both present and at least partly

75 III.6(26).7.9–14.

76 For extensive discussion of this point, see Kalligas, "Plotinus Against the Gnostics," and Narbonne, *Plotinus in Dialogue with the Gnostics*.

constitutive. As a result, Plotinus's understanding of desire offers us an initial example of an inherent model of desire on all levels of reality. I have to this point discussed at length instances of this desire, but now I will turn to articulating its nature, its relation to goodness, and the role it plays in purification.

## 6 What Does It Mean to Desire the Good?

Although I have focused on occurrences of desire for the Good throughout this chapter, what desiring the Good means is anything but straightforward. The nature of goodness is of primary concern to Plotinus, evident in his regular attempts to define, delineate, or determine the Good against all other things. Further, Plotinus discusses being good-like, ἀγαθοειδές, at length. Since desire is determined by its object, and since desire for the Good is connected to its object in kind, understanding what goodness is and what it means for something to be good-like, will help determine the nature of this desire. I will argue through the rest of this chapter that the desire for the Good is, in its purest form, a desire for unity, simplicity, and power. Clarifying it in this way will also set it within the process of assimilation to the Good, purification, and the return. For the Good, qua goodness, is so because it ensures the existence or being of all that comes after it, thereby becoming *their* good, and thus the Good is called good because of the relation things have to it in virtue of its unique quality of ensuring their existence through its power.[77]

The basic definition of goodness and the Good from which I will be working comes from a long discussion of and attempt at defining goodness in treatise VI.7(38). Among other things, Plotinus investigates the nature of the Good, the identity of the Good, and its priority over Intellect, and he offers a dialectical inquiry into what exactly makes something good-like. I will examine more of this treatise in the following section, but as an interim conclusion, Plotinus establishes what the Good does in virtue of which it is the ultimate, good thing.

> They call other things good with reference to this, but the Good is related to nothing. What, then, does it produce (ποιεῖ) by being of this kind (τοι-

77 This conclusion goes a good degree further than what we read in Wiitala, "Desire and the Good in Plotinus," which, while tracing the desire for the Good within the soul, never offers any *content* to the desire itself, and thus never tells us what desire for the Good is. While the Good is indeed ineffable, it has features identifiable from its effects, and the desire for the Good reflects these features. Without them, the Good and its desire remain empty concepts.

> οὗτον ὄν)? In fact, it produced Intellect, Life, and souls from this, and all other things which partake of reason, Intellect, or Life. As for the actual source or principle of these things: who could say how good and great it is? But what does it now produce? In fact, it now preserves these things, and makes thinking things think, living beings live, filling intellect and life with breath, and if something is incapable of life, at least it makes it exist (εἶναι).[78]

In this passage Plotinus emphasizes one of the most basic qualities of the Good—its power—and enumerates the different ways in which the Good expresses this power in beings of all capacities. The Good's use of its power for making all things be in basic and complex ways relates fundamentally to the grounds on which it is said to have the attribute of being *good* in particular, rather than being only the One or the First Cause. However, the effector of this power is the *unity* of the Good, since it is the pure simplicity of the Good that makes it powerful and perfect. In turn, the One is Good because it produces and ensures the being of all that comes after it. As Plotinus explains at the beginning of his treatise on the One, the quality of its being one simpliciter is the fundamental reason that the Good is the good in the first place, since it is on account of its provision of any given thing's *oneness* that the Good ensures that thing's being, that is, that the Good gives the thing in question the power to be.

> All beings are beings due to unity, both those beings that are primarily Beings and those that are said to be among beings in any way. For what could be, if it were not a unity? For if you take away the unity which they are said to be, then they are not those things.[79]

Indeed, it is because of its ability to ensure unity that the One is also called the Good. This is so because, since all things are posterior to it, and as a result inferior to it, they are also reliant on it for their being and thereby stand in need of it always.

> But everything that is said to be in need, is in need of its good, that is, what preserves it. Thus, there is no good for the One, and so it does not have a will for anything. It is beyond good (ὑπεράγαθον), and is good not for itself but for other things, insofar as other things can participate in the Good.[80]

78 VI.7(38).23.17–24.
79 VI.9(9).1.1–4.
80 VI.9(9).6.38–42.

Plotinus makes clear that the One is beyond the good and not good for itself because it needs nothing. There is implied in this statement a basic definition of what it means for something to be good and on what grounds something can be said to be good. Something is said to be good because it is so *for something else* by providing some kind of benefit, not because of what it is for itself. In his introduction to this passage, Emilsson claims that the One is good because it is perfect.[81] Although he is correct that One is indeed perfect because it needs nothing, the One is not good because it is perfect, but on account of something even prior, on account of that which makes the good perfect in the first place: its simplicity, which already underlies its power and perfection. The One's goodness and perfection are both results of this basic nature, as are the One's self-sufficiency, beauty, and so on. All follow from this most fundamental metaphysical claim, and if we lose sight of this connection, we run the risk of adducing many synonyms toward a definition without actually giving one. The One is the Good because of what it is and does for the rest of the system: it produces all things, it makes them be (whatever they are), and it continues doing so outside of time and beyond eternity. But this productivity would be impossible without the pure simplicity that also characterizes the first cause. The Good is good *for everything else*, and it is good truly because it is identical to the quality in virtue of which it is good—its pure simplicity. This is not to say that the Good is for the sake of what comes after it: all things have the Good as their final cause. Rather, it is because all things are for the sake of the Good that it is their good, being good for them alone, not for itself. This point, after all, grounds the desire with which this chapter is concerned: "The Good, then, must be such as to be desired (ἐφετόν), not so that it becomes good by being desired, but rather by being good it becomes desired."[82] The One's simplicity is the reason that it has no real desire at all. The only way in which the One has any kind of desire is in its desire for itself being as it is, and even this discussion occurs in VI.8(39) "for the sake of persuasion," a qualification that functions analogously to Plotinus's well-known "as-if" approach to attributes of the One.[83]

81 Emilsson 2017, 74. See also Emilsson, *Plotinus on Intellect*, 72, where he claims "[the One] is the Good in the sense of being totally self-sufficient and in the sense of being the completeness other things aspire to."

82 VI.7(38).25.16–18.

83 Bussanich has written about both of these qualifications. For the first, see his "Plotinus on the Being of the One," 60; and for the second see *The One and it Relation to Intellect in Plotinus*, 42.

> And it is itself an object of love (ἐράσμιον) and love (ἔρως), that is, love of itself, inasmuch as it is only beautiful by reason of itself and in itself. And indeed whatever is present to itself would not be so if that which is present and that to which it is present were not one or identical. If the thing that is present is one with the thing to which it is present, and the thing in a way desiring (ἐφιέμενον), one with the thing desired (τῷ ἐφετῷ), but the thing desired is with respect to its real existence even like a substrate, then once again desire will have shown itself to be identical to substantiality (ταὐτὸν ἡ ἔφεσις καὶ ἡ οὐσία). If that is so, then it is the identical being that produces itself, and is master of itself, and did not come to be such as another wanted, but as it itself wanted.[84]

Plotinus concludes this train of conditionals by saying that desire, ἔφεσις, is identical with substance, οὐσία. Interestingly, Plotinus claims that "once again," πάλιν αὖ, desire is shown to be identical with substance. He had claimed earlier in chapter 13 that substance and willing, βούλησις, are the same, so that he to some extent identifies βούλησις and οὐσία in this discussion.[85] Further, I have already offered many passages above in which Intellect and Soul are both spoken of in the same way, such that desire, ἔφεσις, generates Intellect and Soul into and as their substantiality. Here, Plotinus claims outright that, at least in the case of the One, desire and substance are the same. Just as the One is beyond substance but is as if it were a substance, it is beyond desire but is as if it were desiring.

Plotinus describes the One in terms of its power in several places, and I will here examine only three passages. Perhaps the clearest articulation of the power of the One occurs in III.8(30).10. After determining at the end of section 9 that the One must be a principle and prior to all things, he begins section 10 by asserting that the One "is the productive power (δύναμις) of all things."[86] He explains the nature of power later in the section, while he reflects on the way in which multiplicities must be preceded by a unity in order to exist at all, a reflection of what we have already seen in VI.9(9).1.

---

84 VI.8(39).15.1–11.

85 VI.8(39).13.5–8: "For if we were to attribute activities to it, and attribute its activities to what is in a way its willing—for it is not active unwillingly—and its activities are in a way its substantiality, then its willing and its substantiality will be identical." Note that earlier in the treatise Plotinus refers to desire, ὄρεξις, as that which must be measured, again marking a distinction between ἔφεσις and other kinds of desire.

86 III.8(30).10.1.

> For this reason, in all cases [of multiplicity], the ascent is to a one. And there is some one in each case to which you will trace it back; and this whole you will trace back to a one before it, not an absolute one, until you come to the absolute One; and this no longer [goes back] to another one. But if you take the one of the plant, and this is also its source which remains, the one of a living being, the one of the soul, and the one of the universe, you take in each case the most powerful (τὸ δυνατώτατον) and valued (τὸ τίμιον) thing.[87]

Here Plotinus articulates that what is most powerful in any given thing is the oneness it has, since the oneness grounds its existence in the first place. This power refers all the way back to the One itself, while also indicating the weaker, proximate oneness that substances like Intellect and Soul themselves ensure. Plotinus states the power of the One most clearly (and famously) in V.3(49).

> We must, therefore, say that it had [all things] in such a way that they were not distinct, whereas the things in the second principle are made distinct by an expressed principle, for this is at once actuality, whereas the One is the productive power (δύναμις) of all things. But what manner of power is this? For it is not what is meant when matter is said to be in potency, namely, because it is receptive. For matter is passive, and this type of being in potency is the opposite of producing. How, then, does it produce what it does not have? Indeed, it does so neither by chance nor by having reflected on what it will produce yet it produces nevertheless.[88]

Plotinus's description of the One's power also explains the relation of actuality to the power, setting actuality after it. I highlight this point because it is important to keep clear that while activities are good, they are not constitutive of the Good itself, a point relevant for understanding the way in which Intellect grasps (or does not grasp) the Good as the object of its desire. In fact, it appears more accurate to say that the Good is closer to the potency Intellect has for sight, which is the desire in inchoate intellect that desired the Good initially. But in the case examined from III.8(30).11, this desire had somehow overflowed the One's simplicity, and instead of constituting the One's own as-if substance (per VI.8(39).15), it constitutes the first proper substance, Intellect. Plotinus makes clear elsewhere that power such as the One has is unmatched:

87 III.8(30).10.20–26.

88 V.3(49).15.30–38.

"The greatness of the Good lies in nothing being more powerful (δυνατώτερον) than it or being capable of being equal to it."[89] Since the One's simplicity determines this power, it is clear that here Plotinus is also claiming that nothing is more powerful than the One because nothing is simpler than it. The Good is good, powerful, and perfect because it is the One, i.e. pure unity. As a result, to desire the Good ultimately means to desire unity, which is to say, to desire the power to be, to continue, to reach a higher level of perfection. Let us now turn to consider the means by which one becomes perfect by becoming like the Good.

## 7 Being Good-Like

Let us now turn to the ways in which Plotinus describes being good-like, since this quality will tell us (1) what aspects of the Good lower levels of reality actually have, and (2) what sorts of things the desire for the Good actually obtains in its pursuit of its true object, the Good. The term good-like, ἀγαθοειδές, appears frequently throughout the *Enn.*, although a proper definition of the term is difficult to attain. Plotinus offers one in VI.7(38), where, as we have seen, he discusses the Good itself at length. After discussing for several sections what might make something (specifically the intelligibles in Intellect) good-like, he reaches the following conclusion at the beginning of section 21.

> What, then, is that one factor in all these things that makes each thing good? Let us venture to say that Intellect and its life are Good-like (ἀγαθοειδῆ), and that desire (ἔφεσιν) is for these, insofar as they are Good-like. I call them 'Good-like' insofar as Life is the activity of the Good, or rather the activity from the Good, an activity which is bounded (ὁρισθεῖσαν).[90]

This definition of good-like is added to, or a clarification of, a remark earlier in VI.7(38) that what runs through all of the Forms that make them good-like is Being.

> Each thing, then, is a Form, and each is, in a way, a unique impression. Since they are Good-like, they all contain in common the thing that runs

89 VI.7(38).32.19–20.

90 VI.7(38).21.1–6.

> through them all; so they all have in them Being (τὸ ὄν), they all have the Living Being, since a life in common is present in all; and, presumably, other things, too.[91]

These remarks are echoed later in the passage from I.7(54) that began this chapter, that things partake of the Good by partaking in unity, being, and form.[92] Plotinus specifies in VI.7(38) that being good-like is being a *bounded* activity from the Good, reflecting his later claims about unity and form. This qualification is common in explaining the difference between the One's unbounded, shapeless, formless nature and the bounded, limited, formal nature of what comes after it. Plotinus explains in VI.8(39) what he means when he says that something is bounded.

> If, then, anything is prior to actuality, then it transcends actuality; and thus transcends Life, too. If Life is in Intellect, then the giver gave Life, and is itself beautiful and more honourable than Life. So, Intellect had Life, and was in no need of a variegated giver. Life was a kind of trace (ἴχνος) of the Good, not the Life of the Good. Life, then, while it was looking to the Good, was indefinite (ἀόριστος), but once it had looked, it was bounded (ὡρίζετο) in the intelligible world, although the Good has no boundary. For straightaway on having looked towards something one it is bounded by it, and has in itself boundary (ὅρον), limit (πέρας), and form (εἶδος). And the form is in the thing shaped, while the thing that shapes is without shape.[93]

The trace of Life that the Good gives Intellect is identical to the trace of the Good Intellect receives in III.8(38).11, for in both cases the trace is identified with the form given to Intellect, and in III.8(38) this trace is also said to be that in virtue of which Intellect is good-like.[94]

As we have already seen in the case of soul's relation to body, Plotinus frequently uses the image of a trace to describe and to account for the relation between different layers of reality. Next in V.3(49), Plotinus articulates the trace

---

91 VI.7(38).16.4–9.

92 I.7(54).2.5–6: "As they, then, partake of unity, being, and form, so they partake of the Good."

93 VI.7(38).17.10–19.

94 III.8(38).11.16–21: "Even when it acquires the Good it becomes Good-like and is perfected by the Good when the form which comes upon it from the Good makes it Good-like. One should conceive of the archetype as being similar by forming an idea of its true archetype from the trace which comes upon Intellect."

of the Good or good-like nature of activity in terms of oneness and unity. In a description of what is in need of the One, he describes Intellect in the following way.

> What, then, is more in need than the One? In fact, it is that which is not one. It is, therefore, many, though, nevertheless, desirous (ἐφίεμενον) of the One. It is, therefore, a 'one-many'. For everything that is not one is preserved by the One and is whatever it is due to this. For if it has not become one, even if it is composed out of many parts, it is not yet that which someone could speak of as 'itself'. And even if someone were able to say what each part is, they would be saying this due to the fact that each is one, that is, due to its being itself (τὸ αὐτό).[95]

So far, we have the following identifications: being good-like is identical to having a trace of the Good, that is, having a trace of Life from the Good in the form of an activity, a shape, a form. Having this form or activity is in turn to be *one* in some way, since ultimately the forms are the instantiations of the One's limitation of Intellect as a substance. Being one in some way is being what a thing is, in terms of this last passage, its being itself. Again, the ultimate metaphysical priority or explanation of some thing's being what it is, rests on its oneness. As Plotinus makes clear in v.6(24), this oneness is obtained by Intellect's thinking of the Good: "Intellect is other than the Good, and it is Good-like by thinking the Good."[96] Plotinus then goes on in v.6(24).4 to articulate again the need for simplicity for Intellect's being anything in the first place. Although the passages I have examined have been primarily about Intellect, soul too is good-like, having a trace of life from Intellect upon itself:

> Since soul, therefore, has life by definition, it does not have the privation of the Good in its own nature. It is, therefore, Good-like, having something good, a trace of Intellect, and it is not evil in its own nature.[97]

The traces of the Good filter down through Plotinus's system, and these traces or instances of things that are good-like account for the fact that the Good is present to everything in some way, further inciting all things to desire the Good. As I will argue in the next section, these traces also work to direct the desire for the Good toward its object. Plotinus explains the way in which things prioritize

95 v.3(49).15.10–15.
96 v.6(24).4.1–6.
97 i.8(51).11.15–18.

the quality of being good-like by describing the way in which Intellect thinks the Good and the relation of this thought to Intellect itself.

> And since whenever that which is other than the Good thinks it, it thinks it by being Good-like, that is, having a likeness in relation to the Good, and thinks it as the Good and as desirable (ἐφετόν) to itself, and in a way having an image of the Good. And if it is always like this, it always does this. And again, in the act of intellection, it thinks itself accidentally. For looking towards the Good, it thinks itself. For in its activity, it thinks itself; given that the activity of everything is towards the Good.[98]

Thus, being good-like and fostering this aspect of oneself is paramount to fostering the part of oneself that is more real, more powerful, and as a result, better. And in so doing, individual things work toward satisfying their desire for the Good. For, as Plotinus explains in VI.8(39), desiring the Good is already to want to be the Good and to try to be the Good primarily. He explains what he means with this claim by, again, relating goodness and the desire for the Good to oneness and existence.

> Each being, in desiring (ἐφιέμενον) the Good, wills (βούλεται) to be that rather than what it itself is; and it thinks it is most of all that, when it participates in the Good. In such a case, each thing chooses for itself being (τὸ εἶναι) insofar as it can come to possess it from the Good.[99]

Here we finally have it, that to desire the Good is to desire to be, correlate to the metaphysical explanation that the Good is good because it ensures being for all things, activity and life being stronger, more intense instances of being. Desire for the Good, as correlate to this metaphysical explanation, itself functions structurally as the reality of any individual's striving to be, a reality that is fundamental insofar as the striving to be is what not only begins, but constitutes Plotinus's system as a whole, explained as it is in terms of unity and multiplicity, ones and manys—in addition to the claims about the ubiquity of desire examined in the first part of chapter. It is now clearer for what reason Plotinus describes the generation of hypostases in terms of desire in general, and desire for the Good in particular: desire for the Good is simply for something to will itself into being as much as it can, fully reliant on the One's goodness,

98 V.6.(24).5.13–19.

99 VI.8(39).13.12–16, modified.

that is, the One's unity, and therefore power, to sustain it in this desire. The One's method of sustainability is to give traces of itself—its oneness expressed as life or being—to the Intellect in the manner of activities or forms, shape from its shapelessness, and then for Intellect to do the same for Soul, which itself desires both the Good and the traces thereof, that is, Intellect. Further, in the instances of desire discussed above, I examined passages in which judgment, thought, or action were manifestations of the desire for the Good. These expressions also become clearer in light of the identification of goodness and being. In judgments or even in misguided action, individuals desire and aim at the Good insofar as they are desiring that their being or existence be secured in their judgment or deed. Although Plotinus at least once describes the body and matter as desiring of the better, he nevertheless makes a strong distinction between desires and appetites, the latter being a specific power of the soul concerned with the body, posterior to the desire integral to soul's constitution. Often, these two conative forces are at odds, which is why human beings are in need of virtuous training as a part of becoming like the Good.

## 8 Becoming like the Good

Plotinus's ethical writings focus on questions of happiness, becoming virtuous, and living the good life. Now that I have argued for the connection of desire and goodness throughout Plotinus's system, I would like to relate this discussion to the way(s) in which desire and being good-like are involved in actually becoming good and living a good life. Others have discussed the process of becoming virtuous at length, and I want to overview here only the passages in which Plotinus discusses virtue and purification in terms of measure, limit, or unity.[100]

Plotinus discusses virtue at length in I.2(19), where he claims that one attains it by becoming as much like God as possible. There he distinguishes between two kinds of assimilation or likeness: one that requires sameness between the two things made like (as in two different human beings), and one in which the thing brought into likeness is posterior to that with which it is made like.[101] Virtue is an instance of this latter likeness. Let me briefly sketch the two kinds of virtue most germane to this discussion, the civic and the purificatory. Via civic virtues, likeness is imparted to the body, "which they limit and give measure to our appetites and, generally, give measure to our affective states."[102] Plotinus

100 For a concise discussion on this point, see Emilsson, *Plotinus*, 296–334.

101 I.2(19).2.5–10.

102 I.2(19).2.15–17.

draws the act of limiting and making like in the process of becoming virtuous close to the relationship between body and soul. He claims that, "These virtues, which are themselves limited insofar as they are measures in 'matter', that is, soul, are assimilated to the measure that is in the intelligible world and they have a trace (ἴχνος) of the best that is there."[103] They do so "by imposing limits (τῷ ὡρίσθαι) on us and by the fact that that which is measured is placed outside the things that are unmeasured and unlimited (τῶν ἀμέτρων καὶ ἀορίστων)."[104] Just as soul limits matter and brings it into a unity in the bodily compound, the civic virtues function by limiting the appetites (ἐπιθυμίας) of the soul and bringing those into unity with themselves. As a result of this process, once one has attained civic virtue, one's appetites are measured according to the traces of Intellect. Thus, we find that Plotinus expresses the relation between matter, soul, and virtue in terms of form and formlessness: "For matter, being in every way unmeasured (ἄμετρον), is unassimilated to everything. But insofar as it participates in form, to that extent is it assimilated to (ὁμοιοῦται) that formless reality (ἀνειδέῳ) [the Good]."[105] It follows from this account of likeness that the soul, when attaining civic virtue, becomes more like the Good by participating in limit and becoming more formed, as it were. The Forms function as guides to the Good by providing points of possible likeness insofar as they are primarily good-like. Just as matter's desire (ἔφεσις) for soul (τὸ κρείττον) leads to its improvement by making it more like the soul, the civic virtues bring the part of the soul most vulnerable to influence by appetite and passion into a better moral state. An especially relevant part of this claim is that greater participation in form produces greater likeness to the One or the Good, which is form*less*, a description of the One encountered above. The point here is that the more one participates in form the more unified one is, and thus the closer one is to the One or to the formless, ultimate point of unity. This procession via form toward formlessness accords with Plotinus's explanation of the desire that spurs our investigation in the first place, namely that all people experience a formless desire for a formless object, i.e. the One. More on this point below.

Purificatory virtues are responsible for cleansing the soul of everything alien to it, by which Plotinus means affections and passions, specifically, those that are *involuntary*.[106] The goal here is again likeness to Intellect. Just as in the attainment of civic virtue, in the process of attaining the purificatory virtues body and soul are likened to *traces* of Intellect, and the soul as a whole becomes

103 I.2(19).2.18–20.
104 I.2(19).2.17–18.
105 I.2(19).2.20–24.
106 I.2(19).5.10–15.

like Intellect. The difference between assimilation in the case of civic virtue and in the case of purificatory virtue is that the former case always somehow concerns soul's relation body or to the world in which bodies live, while the latter case concerns soul's relation to Intellect and that world, thus paving the way for the vision at the completion of the purificatory virtues.[107] When Plotinus discusses the purificatory virtues, he speaks of the higher, undescended soul in Intellect. He claims that it would be best to free oneself altogether of *passion* (θυμός), while remaining aware of pleasures insofar as one "[uses] them as treatments and relief from pain so that [the soul] should not be disturbed."[108] Pleasure can function even within the purified individual as a way of caring for the body to help it maintain its minimal role in the progression of the good life. Plotinus is also explicit when he reaches the issue of desire: This higher soul itself must not have an appetite for anything bad, nor for things proper to the body. In III.6(26).5, Plotinus explains that the purification of the soul must entail "leaving [the body] alone," and waking oneself up from images that disturb the soul. We find elsewhere that the waking from images applies not only to the imagination, but also to lower soul, of which in IV.3(27) Plotinus claims, "For the faculty of sense perception is, in a way, one that judges (κριτικόν), and the faculty of imaginative representation is, in a way, intellectual (νοερόν), as are impulse (ὁρμή) and desire (ὄρεξις) which follow imagination and reason."[109] As a result, these lower parts of the self are capable of entertaining pseudo-images, and must be purified accordingly.[110] He details in III.6(26).5 the process of purification, especially this process with respect to the lower soul.

> But if there is a turning in the other direction to above from below, surely, this is purification, or even separation, in the case of the soul which is no longer in the body as to belong to it, but which is like a light which is not in murkiness? And yet the light in the midst of gloom still remains unaffected.[111]

Here Plotinus specifies that this light refers to the lower soul that is responsible for the body. Even while in the body as if it belonged to it (although Plotinus clearly thinks that it does not), the light that is the soul is not itself affected

107 For a summary of the difference see Emilsson, *Plotinus*, 301.

108 I.2(19).5.8–9.

109 IV.3(27).23.31–32.

110 On this point see Calouri, *Plotinus on the Soul*, 163–171, where he argues that the so-called lower part of soul is reducible to the power of presentation, the φανταστικόν.

111 III.6(26).5.18–23.

by the body. Further, Plotinus maintains that the light undergoes a transformation in the act of purification. Through the turning, the light changes in its activity and continues in its now transformed wakeful state. This description is similar to Plotinus's description of the state of the soul after purification, where he describes virtue as, "A seeing and an impression of that which has been seen embedded in it and now active—like seeing in relation to the object seen."[112] The soul, in its conclusion of virtuous aspiration, now has a state or activity that it shares with Intellect that goes beyond soul's purificatory efforts. Although this activity or vision is new, it is unclear to what extent or at what level of virtuous activity soul might be united with Intellect.[113] Nevertheless, it is this person, the one who has attained to the vision beyond the purificatory virtue, who Plotinus claims is happy.[114] For, ultimately, in the process of becoming virtuous, one becomes more like the Good, since assimilation to the intelligibles, either as a vision of soul or as a unification, brings one closer or closest to the activity that is an immediate expression of the Good—the intellection of the good-like traces of life upon Intellect. Thus, Plotinus describes the soul as a lover fashioning itself into a likeness of the one it loves, for "in this way, soul loves the Good, because it was moved to love from the beginning."[115] The examination in this chapter now also returns to the beginning, namely, the desire for the Good, present to all things from the beginning, giving shape but itself formless and limitless.

## 9 Formless Desire

I have argued now that purification as a process requires one to embrace a unifying procedure aiming at the Good itself, following the traces of the Good and its good-like reflections toward the true object of desire, the Good itself. In the course of this discussion, the nature of the Good as shapeless has arisen multiple times, and it is time we focused on this point in particular. For, in the examination of the desire for the Good, one may well wonder to what extent this desire might itself be formless or limitless, since, as we read above in VI.7(38).17, the Good is shapeless and unbounded, yet it is the giver of shape and limit to what comes after it. Further, in his discussion of goods, Plotinus sets assimilation to the Good into relation to desire, ἔφεσις, for the Good.

112 I.2(19).4.18–20.

113 See again the helpful discussion in Emilsson, *Plotinus*, 300–305.

114 I.4(46).4.5–20; .16.5–18.

115 VI.7(38).31.11–18.

> Other things which have the Good like this, have it in two ways, by assimilating (ὡμοιῶσθαι) themselves to it, and by directing their activity towards it. If, then, desire (ἔφεσις) and activity towards that which is best is good, the Good must not look to something else nor be desirous of something else … For, once more, we must posit the Good to be that upon which all things depend, whereas it depends on nothing. For in this way it is true that it is 'that which all things desire'.[116]

Plotinus's claim in this passage that things assimilate themselves to the Good (rather than to good-like things) is a bit problematic. The formal, good-like nature of the intelligibles in Intellect appears inconsistent with, if not in contradiction to, the formless, shapeless nature of the Good. This comparison raises another problem with Plotinus's claims about the desire for the Good: individuals and hypostases would appear to have desire only for traces of the Good, good-like things, which are defined and definable. In what way would it make sense to say that one desires something formless? Nevertheless, Plotinus claims that we do indeed desire something of this nature, even as he acknowledges the difficulty with which such a desire presents us. In his reflection on the nature of the One in VI.9(9), he considers this problem, asking in what way it is possible for a soul even to be aware of the One as a discrete being.

> What, then, would the One be, what nature would it have? In fact, it is no wonder it is not easy to say, when it is not easy to say what Being or Form is. Indeed, our cognition (γνῶσις) relies on Forms, and so the more the soul moves towards what is formless (ἀνείδεον), it glances off the object and is afraid it will have nothing, since it is completely incapable of comprehending the object on account of not being limited by, and, in a way, given an impression by, the variegation of the thing making the impression.[117]

Since soul cannot form an image of the object of its desire—since it cannot think it or comprehend it—it is unsure of the way in which it might obtain the formless object of this desire. If we acknowledge the passages in which Plotinus explicitly attributes to soul an awareness of and desire for the Good itself, Plotinus reveals an important aspect of his thinking here in this passage from VI.9(9). He is telling us that soul can grasp things outside of thinking or cognition, and here he clearly does not mean a kind of awareness connected to or

116 I.7(54).1.12–25.

117 VI.9(9).3.1–7.

concerned with the body. Rather, soul's awareness of the One is somehow external to thought as such—even though thought plays an integral role in helping soul, for example, understand that there is a One, what the One might be like, and even the fact that thought itself can take the soul only so far. This explanation is not entirely surprising, as I have examined similar maneuvers above. For example, we read in VI.7(38) that desire itself is specific to the *goodness* in good things, not the individual thing as a whole: "They look for the Good prior to reason as well. But if they desire (ἐφίεται) life and eternal existence and activity, then the object desired (τὸ ἐφετόν) is not desired as Intellect, but as Good, as deriving from the Good and leading to the Good; for that is the way life is."[118]

This desire for the Good will ultimately be unlimited as well. In section 32 of VI.7(38) one finds an extended discussion of the nature of the Good, and Plotinus there discusses the way in which the Good relates to beauty in terms of form and formlessness: "The formless (τὸ ἀνείδεον) is a principle (ἀρχή), not something in need of a shape, but the origin of all intellectual shape."[119] Plotinus continues, and offers an explanation of the fact that and on what grounds the nature of the formless object affects the nature of the desire for that object.

> Further, if there is something desirable which you can grasp neither figure nor shape of, then it would be the most desirable (ποθεινότατον) and lovable (ἐρασμιώτατον) thing; and the love is immeasurable (ἄμετρος). For love here is not limited (ὥρισται), because neither is the beloved; the love of it is without limit (ἄπειρος), such that its beauty is beautiful in a different way, and is beauty beyond beauty.[120]

The love for the shapeless is immeasurable because the object of that love itself is immeasurable and without limit. Immediately following, Plotinus also explains the way in which the Good bestows the formless aspect of itself onto other things, and thus in what way this aspect—goodness—might be present within and distinct from formal things.

> Since the Good is the principle of that beauty, it produces that beautiful thing of which it is the principle; it makes it beautiful but not in shape. The beauty produced is shapeless, although it is in a different sense in a

118 VI.7(38).20.19–end.

119 VI.7(38).32.9–12.

120 VI.7(38).32.24–30.

> shape. For the shape is so called only when it is the shape in another thing, and is in itself shapeless. Whatever, then, participates in beauty is shaped, not the beauty itself.[121]

This structure is similar to one examined above, according to which something is good-like when it has life from the Good. It is worth highlighting that even there, what is good-like, and thus what is desired, is something bounded in Intellect, but which in its source and in its nature is unbounded. This characterization of the desire for the Good as unlimited might sound familiar, for it occurred above when Plotinus describes the desire that the hypostases of Intellect and Soul have for the Good. In addition, there are the passages in which Plotinus explicitly claims that the individual desires the Good itself or that the Good is present, such as his claim that, "The Good, inasmuch as it was present of old to an innate desire (ἔφεσιν σύμφυτον), and is also present to those who are asleep, does not amaze those who sometimes see it, because it is always with them and there is never a recollection of it," or when he claims that, "Because it possesses love, even if it does not know that it possesses it, it is always searching. Because it wants to be carried towards the Good."[122] How, then, can one account for these claims while aware of the ontological distance, so to speak, between individuals and the Good and of the interim good-like things that might also function as objects of good-directed desire?

In VI.7(38).17, Plotinus describes Intellect's life before it was bound by the One as indefinite (ἀόριστος), and in V.3(49) he characterizes the desire and sight of inchoate intellect as unformed (ἀτύπωτος).[123] And in his discussion of soul's generation of itself and of Love in III.5(50), Plotinus explicitly refers to the indefiniteness (ἀοριστίας) that Soul had before it attained the Good.[124] Further, in V.1(10), Plotinus describes both Intellect *and* Soul as in some way unlimited before they are fully generated.

> What are, then, called Number and the Dyad in the intelligible world are expressed principles and Intellect. But whereas the Dyad, understood as a sort of substrate, is indefinite (ἀόριστος), each Number that comes from it and the One is a Form, Intellect in a way having been shaped by the

121 VI.7(38).32.30–39.

122 V.5(32).12.10–13 and VI.7(38).31.17–24.

123 VI.7(38).17.14–16 and V.3(49).11.12–14.

124 III.5(50).7.6.

> Forms that come to be in it. In one manner, it is shaped by the One, and in another by itself, as in the way the power of sight is actualized.[125]

This account of Intellect is a bit abstruse, but it is not an unusual way for Plotinus to discuss the first substance.[126] The Indefinite Dyad is the immediate production of the One, and produces Form and number. The dyad is indefinite, but defined by the One itself when the dyad receives the Forms (which make it into number, i.e. a multiplicity of ones). Its indefinite nature may be grasped even after it receives form, when one takes it alone as a substratum. Plotinus again invokes the potentiality of sight to explain the indefiniteness and then actualization of forms within Intellect, and this point connects to another way in which Plotinus describes inchoate intellect: intelligible matter. We saw above in III.8(30).11 that Plotinus claims there is matter and form in Intellect:

> Since Intellect is a kind of sight and a sight that is seeing, it will be [like] a potency which is actualized. So, there will be its matter and its form, though matter here is intelligible. Besides, actual seeing, too, is twofold; before seeing it was one; then, the one became two and the two one.[127]

Plotinus also refers to the "beautiful" matter of Intellect earlier in V.1(10), and discusses intelligible matter at some length in II.4(12).[128] In II.4(12).4, Plotinus offers within his description of intelligible matter four arguments for its existence. The four arguments are as follows: 1. Given that the Forms are many (assumed here, argued elsewhere), there must be something in common to them all. 2. Imagistic argument: there is matter in the sensible world, thus it must also exist in the intelligible world. 3. Matter is a requirement for an ordered universe. 4. There must be a unifying factor that receives the shapes of

125 V.1(10).5.13–18.

126 For more on the Indefinite Dyad, see, for example, V.4(7).2.4–9. For literature on the topic, see Rist, "The Indefinite Dyad," 99–107; Bussanich, *The One and its Relation to Intellect*, 91; Lloyd Gerson, *Plotinus*, 101; on its connection to numbers Maggi, "The Plotinian Rethinking of Dyad" 79–89.

127 III.8(30).11.1–5. Regarding intelligible matter, Nikulin has shown that there is a close connection between Plotinus's use of intelligible matter and imagination, such that souls are using intelligible matter all the time. One might add that Plotinus makes clear that soul must receive its unity always from Intellect (in fact he claims that soul "is matter in relation to Intellect" [III.9.5.3]), and further that it is the task of virtue to unify the soul so that it may form to Intellect (see I.2(19).4 and VI.9(9).5.21–25). See Nikulin, "Memory and Recollection," 183–201, as well as Nikulin, "Intelligible Matter in Plotinus," 85–114.

128 V.1(10).3.24 and II.4(4).3–4.

the Forms. It is this last argument on which Plotinus lingers, for the multiplicity of Forms within Intellect must exist within some one thing, some unifying factor, which is responsible for the subsistent unity of Forms and which is shaped within Forms, which makes it a varied and many-shaped unity.

> But if [as in the case of the intelligible cosmos], it is indivisible while being many, then the many are in one and matter is the one they are in, themselves being its shapes. So, think of this one as variegated or multi-shaped. It is itself, then, shapeless (ἄμορφον) prior to being variegated. For if you think away the variegation or shapes, or the expressed principles or the intelligible content, you are left with what preceded these, which is shapeless and indefinite (ἀόριστον) and none of the things that are on it and in it.[129]

The description of intelligible matter as shapeless and formless is the same as the description Plotinus offers of pre-noetic desire, in addition to his identification of both with sight and seeing. Further, a recurring claim in this chapter has been that from V.6(24).5: "And this is intellection: motion towards the Good that it desires (ἐφιέμενον). For the desire (ἔφεσις) generated the intellection and caused it to exist with itself. For desire for seeing is sight." Although Plotinus uses different terms to describe it, what emerges is a single, unifying substrate that is fundamentally a desire striving for ultimate unity, and as I have argued above, this desire is the initial and deepest part of substance.

We find similar descriptions of soul as well. There are passages in which Plotinus explains Soul's unification with Intellect by describing soul as a kind of intelligible matter or additional substratum of Intellect. "So, becoming intellect, one should entrust the soul to the intellect, and subordinate it to intellect, so that, being awakened, it may take in what the intellect sees."[130] Plotinus reiterates this idea in III.9(13).5, where he explains Soul's relation to Intellect in terms of matter. "Soul itself must be like sight; Intellect is what is visible to it, but it is indefinite (ἀόριστον) before it sees, yet by nature capable of thinking; therefore, it is matter for Intellect."[131] The notion that setting one's soul under Intellect enables the reception of Intellect rests on the connection between seeing, becoming what one sees, and the capacity of non-physical substances to

129 II.4(12).4. On this point, see Rist, "The Indefinite Dyad," 101 ff.; and Bussanich, *The One and its Relation to Intellect*, 119.

130 V.9(9).3.24–27.

131 III.9(13).5.

assimilate to one another fully.[132] Plotinus explains the assimilation of different substances to one another in VI.9(9): "When there is no otherness, the things that are not other are present to each other."[133] Although bodies are unable to form a unity with other bodies, this is not the case with soul and Intellect.[134] If soul makes itself like Intellect, it can assimilate to it through the coincidence afforded by its non-physical nature, and in so doing, soul is eventually able to share in Intellect's vision and activity. Soul assimilates itself to Intellect and then to the Good by being like matter, for, as Plotinus argues, "It is as one says in the case of matter, that it has to be unqualified by anything, if it is to take on the impressions of all things; so, in this case, the soul has to be formless (ἀνείδεον) to a greater degree, if it is not to be prevented from being filled and illuminated by the first nature."[135] Thus soul can and must embrace a formless aspect of itself in order to look upward. That this aspect exists within Soul and its generation and construction we read also in V.1(10).7 in the description of Soul's generation: "That which was generated by [Intellect] could, in this case as well, not be superior to it but had to be an inferior reflection of it, first similarly undefined (ἀόριστον), and then defined (ὁριζόμενον) and made a kind of image by that which generated it."[136] As I argued above, this indefinite element is the same unlimited desiring that Soul has for the Good manifested as Love: "Love [was] made of form and indefiniteness (ἀοριστίας); this [indefiniteness] the soul had before it encountered the Good, yet could divine something of it present in the guise of an indefinite (ἀόριστον) and limitless (ἄπειρον) semblance."[137]

In his explanations of the indefinite desire of both Intellect and Soul, Plotinus frequently refers to a vague or unlimited image (φάντασμα) of the Good. This inclusion is, I think, important, insofar as the image determines both the desire and the products that occur on account of that desire. The object of the unlimited desire in both hypostases is absolute simplicity, and Intellect and Soul in turn generate the simplest products of which they are capable, since they have this vague image as their object and inspiration, as it were. For Intellect, this generation is of the intelligibles, which spring off from Intellect as individual ones within Intellect's unifying, intelligible matter. For Soul,

132 VI.9(9).8.16–20.

133 VI.9(9).8.33–34.

134 On this point, see Plotinus's discussion of body's instability in IV.4(28).18.

135 VI.9(9).7.13–17. For limitations on this assimilation, see Emilsson, *Intellect in Plotinus*, 127–141.

136 V.1(10).7.38–42.

137 III.5(50).7.4–8, slightly altered. Taking the ἥν here to refer to the ἀοριστίας immediately preceding it.

this generation is of individual souls stemming from Soul's hypostatic structure, themselves individual unities desiring the Good. Plotinus explains this generation in III.5(50).4.18–26, saying that just as there are many souls sprung from one soul, there are many loves sprung from one love. He identifies, in his mythic terminology, the Soul with Aphrodite, since systematically soul is the mother of love and mythically Aphrodite is the mother of love:

> And we must think that there are many Aphrodites, too, in the universe, becoming daemons in it along with Love, all flowing from a universal Aphrodite, many partial Aphrodites depending on the universal Aphrodite along with their individual Loves, if indeed soul is the mother of Love, and that Aphrodite is soul and Love the activity of soul which strives (ὀριγνωμένης) for the Good. So, this individual Love leads each soul to the nature of the Good; the Love of the higher soul would be a god who always binds the soul to the Good.[138]

The description of many souls springing from the universal soul matches the more characteristic account of the multiplicity of souls that Plotinus offers in IV.3(27) of the way in which different souls come from one Soul permanently residing in Intellect.[139]

These underlying, congenitally formless but form-giving elements of the hypostases are identical to the formless desire of the Good that lies at the base of the substance of both Intellect and Soul. One might assume that this aspect is somehow subsumed into the formal definition of both Intellect and Soul once each is substantially defined, but in each case, it is clear that Plotinus does not think so. In Intellect, the intelligible matter holds the intelligibles together within Intellect's intellection, built into the structure of Intellect, and thus is eternally functional. Soul has a permanently formless capacity it uses to assimilate to the Intellect, and a formless capacity that underlies the generation of individual souls and instances of love. The nature of both Intellect and Soul is ultimately to unify by giving life in their various iterations, and it is now clear that this unifying capacity comes not from thought qua thought, but from the unifying capacity each has substantially. Grounding this unifying capacity is

138 III.5(50).4.18–23.

139 IV.3(27).5.15–20: "The souls come from one Soul, and those that are from the one Soul are many in the identical manner [intellects are] in Intellect, being divided and yet not divided in the identical manners, and the Soul that remains above is a unique expressed principle of Intellect, and from it come individual expressed principles which are yet immaterial, as it is in the intelligible world."

the desire for the Good, in itself formless like its object, but making formal unities in imitation of this ultimately simple object. Let us linger on this point for a moment.

The presence of the formless, shapeless desire reveals itself through the unifying function of Intellect and Soul, for the fact that these two substances desire unity and being for themselves and that they give them to their products is a direct manifestation of their desire for the Good. The examination of the role of intelligible matter above shows that at the most basic level, Intellect is a unified, unifying substance, and thus perhaps it should not be that surprising that there be two aspects of its activity. In VI.7(38).35 Plotinus distinguishes Intellect's capacity to think itself from that by which it looks to the Good, saying, "So, Intellect has one power to think insofar as it regards what is in itself, and another insofar as it regards what transcends itself, with a kind of apprehension and receptivity (ἐπιβολῇ τινι καὶ παραδοχῇ). It is in accordance with the second power that it first sees, and then later while still seeing both comes to be intellect and a unity."[140] In the next few lines in this passage lies the well-known passage about drunk Intellect. But we should see that, even without Plotinus's metaphorical flourish, this power for apprehension and receptivity is philosophically accounted for and metaphysically functional within Intellect's own activity of intellection, insofar as it is the unifying activity of intelligible matter, the desire at the base of Intellect that is formless and shapeless in the manner of its purely simple object. Further, in III.8(30), Plotinus explains, "In fact, the intellect must, in a way, retreat to what is behind it and somehow let go of itself to what is behind it, since it looks both ways, and in the intelligible world, if it wants to see the One, it must be not entirely intellect."[141] The reference to being not entirely intellect refers also to the unifying element of Intellect that alone does not constitute Intellect in its entirety, that is, the unifying substratum is only part of Intellect—it needs to generate the intelligibles to realize Intellect as a substance. In his examination of the sight analogy in Plotinus's noetics, Phillips argues that, "It is some extraordinary mode of unified vision (ἀθρόα ἐπιβολή), which is far different from the noetic ἀθρόα ἐπιβολή in that νοῦς, by virtue of self-transcendence, is no longer 'all intellect' and so does not 'see' intellectually."[142] Further, he convincingly argues for this unified vision as a kind of "passive vision" identical to that found in inchoate intellect.[143]

140 VI.7(38).35.20–24.

141 III.8(30).9.29–32.

142 Phillips, "Plotinus and the 'Eye'," 89. On the one's apprehension of itself, see Bussanich, "Plotinus on the Inner Life," especially 169–172.

143 Phillips, "Plotinus and the 'Eye'," 93, 97–98.

Plotinus claims in VI.7(38) that the One or the Good is formless (ἀνείδεον), a principle (ἀρχή), but the giver of all intelligible shape (μορφή). As examined above, it is the source or principle of making, being. And since, metaphysically speaking, things outside of the One can *be* only as formal, discrete things (given that there is already a formless unity that cannot replicate itself), the formless principle makes things be by giving form. (And, speaking with metaphysical rigor, it is the desiring of inchoate intellect that realizes these forms, they are not distinct in the One on any account.) So, when one desires the Good, one desires this being or making be, which is realized below the One in the being or living aspect of a form, and not, by contrast, in the specific delineation of the formal aspect. Further, this living or being is endless, one cannot encompass all of it, for ultimately it is formless or shapeless. But the One, as the Good, functions in this formlessness: it makes be, in the way that turning on a light makes be, and the inchoate intellect actualizes within itself the various intelligibles.[144] And the desire for the Good desires *this* making be, this existing, and it desires instances of this making be even while and insofar as it desires primarily the source of this making be, because ultimately they share a similar nature. When it desires instances of this Good, it desires the goodness in them, this making be, not the specifics that delineate individual activities and lives from one another, e.g. horseness, justice, humanity, etc. These individual activities are all ultimately for the sake of that Good, which is to say that they exist as individual instances of making be, which desire the Good through their activities by means of which they are alive and have a good-like nature. That is not to say that the soul does not have a power for thought that itself is satisfied by thinking forms and formal principles in all their variety. It is only to say that at the deepest part of substance there is desire for the Good that is ultimately outside of, and, as Plotinus tells us, separable from thought. This claim is also not to say that Intellect or soul somehow reject reason, thinking, or intelligibility as such.[145] Much concern has been generated among philosophers because of claims that Plotinus rejects rationality or thinking, although there have recently been good steps toward reconciling

144 See Corrigan's discussion of the power within Intellect in, "Sources and Structures of Power and Activity in Plotinus," 32–34. There he expounds on a similar idea of the power of Intellect on 33: "Pure unrestricted power is where activity and power coincide. If the activity that is thought or perception has to 'lean on something' in order to think or see any object or even light, then purely self-directed activity must be unrestricted power for existence, distinguished from the One only because such power is ultimately a creative act in the thing caused."

145 This position is thus distinct from that considered by Bussanich in, "Mystical Elements," 5300–5330, especially the discussion of Irwin on 5301 ff.

"mystical" aspects of Plotinus's thought with intellectual ones, such as Emilsson's sober account in his recent monograph.[146] Even so, one might worry that a non-rational or supra-rational approach to and potentially even apprehension of the Good undermines the philosophical rigor of Plotinus's system or puts the importance of intellection at risk. But this concern is fundamentally misguided, for desire of the Good is ultimately proto-thinking, it is the power that turns into Intellect as a substance, that actualizes the intelligibles into their true being. To say that desire for the Good undermines thought would be contradictory to its basic function, which is to ensure the activity of the forms in Intellect at every moment. Once we understand that, the concern for their safety, as it were, dissipates. The desire for the Good is itself facilitated by thought, using the intelligibles like a roadmap to the One. Such a process might result in the Intellect itself looking toward the One, or even only to the unified aspect of itself, recognizing the object of its desire therein, but it in no way requires, for example, a soul that has united to Intellect—or Intellect itself—to reject thinking as such, but to adjust its gaze only slightly.

After examining the ways in which Plotinus discusses desire structurally, that is, the way in which desire underlies substance and coordinates Plotinus's system into an upward-facing push toward the One, it became clear that Plotinus's account of desire rested on an inherent model of desire. As a result, desire is permanent and connected to its object, the Good, in kind. After arguing for the centrality of desire for the Good, I examined the nature of the Good and goodness as such, arguing that the Good is good because it ensures the being and existence of all things after it. Thus, being good-like means to share in this being by having traces of life and activity. Becoming more good-like, or living well through the obtainment of virtue, means effectively to unify one's soul as intensely as possible, aligning it with the life and unity of Intellect. Finally, I argued that the desire for the Good is formless and shapeless in alignment with its object, the purely simple One. This desire is possible for the different hypostases and individual souls insofar as desire is identical to the intelligible matter which functions as the basis of substance, and this intelligible matter has a permanent, unifying and desiring activity toward the Good. The permanence of the desire for the good is itself due to the formless, unlimited, and absolutely simple nature of the Good, which renders it unable to be fully experienced or grasped. Behind all rational substances, which is to say all things (since all things have some relation to λόγοι or rational principles), we find two capacities: one directed toward thinking and one directed toward the Good.

146 Emilsson, *Plotinus*, 335–347.

Nevertheless, this dual capacity does not in itself undermine the importance and status of thought within Plotinus's system. For when Intellect (or an individual soul united with it) has a chance of seeing or divining the ultimate object of its desire, it simply will not do so by means of thinking, since thinking by its very nature divides and multiplies. Thus, desire for the Good itself is the very actualization or realization of a substance's potential, an actualizing potency connected to the Good in kind, albeit capable of grounding other instances of desire, or of grounding substance as such. This desire never ceases, as it cannot but fail to attain a permanent grasp of its object.

The central role Plotinus affords desire in his metaphysical system reappears almost 800 years later, when, in 5th/11th century al-Andalus, the Jewish philosopher-poet Ibn Gabirol places it in the center of his system expounded in his *Fons Vitae*. Specifically, Ibn Gabirol connects desire to matter, both being, in his account, active on and basic to all levels of the structure of the universe.[147] Indeed, the desire that, according to Ibn Gabirol, is at the heart of the human being and the world is for good, showing the deep connection between Plotinus's account and later accounts, in whatever way later thinkers had access to Plotinus's thought. Further, Ibn Gabirol's system, later termed a "universal hylomorphism" by scholastics, shows that a non-psychological model of inherent desire of the sort I have argued we find in Plotinus is not unparalleled.[148] Although in the remainder of this book, we will consider primarily psychological desire, the inherent model of desire will recur. We will, for example, find inherent models of desire in one translation of Aristotle's *DA* and in Ibn Ṭufayl. But we have some ways to go before we get to them. First, we turn to the adaptation of Plotinus's discussion of desire as it appears in Arabic translation.

147 Pessin, *Ibn Gabirol*, 32–40 and 92–106.

148 Pessin, ch. 6, as well as 106–113.

CHAPTER 2

# The *Plotiniana Arabica* and Desire's Discontents

The *Plotiniana Arabica* are the most crucial point in the transmission of Neoplatonic conceptions about desire. This collection includes three sources in which an Arabic paraphrase of *Enn.* IV–VI of Plotinus survives: the so-called *Theology of Aristotle*, *Sayings of the Greek Sage*, and *Epistle on Divine Science*.[1] Plotinus's philosophy undergoes significant changes in its Arabic adaptation, including the alteration of the ubiquity and function of desire. The ascription of desire to Intellect is curtailed, and the functionality of formlessness excised, with the result that desire lies primarily within the realm of soul, and, even there, is markedly rational. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the prologue to the so-called *Theology of Aristotle*, we find then entire text cast in terms of desire, reading, "All generated agents act because of the natural, primordial desire (*al-šawq al-ṭabīʿī al-sarmadī*), and that desire and searching is a second cause."[2] Although the adaptation recasts the timbre and distribution of desire, it is faithful in its transmission of an inherent model of desire, according to which desire is part of substance as such, although in the adaptation that substance is, in most passages, soul alone. This rationalization of desire affects desire's capacity to reach its object, by putting the object of desire, attainment to the realm of Intellect, within reach. The adaptation offers a concise glimpse of the tension between being faithful to Plotinus's text and accommodating an Aristotelian sensibility and hermeneutic framework. Indeed, this chapter examines what we might call an Aristotelianization of desire, insofar as the adaptations in general incorporate Aristotelian elements into the text and because one of the recensions of the adaptation was attributed directly to Aristotle as the *Theology of Aristotle*. Further, the final section of this chapter examines Avicenna's own remarks on desire as it is presented in the *Theology of Aristotle*, where we will see this tension even more explicitly.

1 For an overview of these texts, see Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus*, 5–18; D'Ancona, "Greek into Arabic," 10–31; and originally, Zimmermann, "The Origins," 208–217.

2 *Plotini Opera*, 486; Badawī, *Aflutin ʿinda l-ʿarab*, 4. All references to Arabic Plotinus texts will include Lewis's classification, the page number of the English translation in Henry–Schwyzer's edition, and the corresponding Arabic that I consult in each case. The translations belong to Lewis, but have been slightly modified insofar as I have changed his use of "mind" to "intellect," and tried to translate variants of *š-w-q* always as "desire." Otherwise, major modifications will be noted, as will any change in translator. On the identity of the author of the prologue, see Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus*, 27 ff.

In this chapter, I will examine the presence and function of desire as found within the available Arabic Plotinus materials in order to determine the connection between desire, rationality, and the Good. First, I will examine discussion of the presence of desire in Intellect, soul, and the body, considering the terminology used to indicate different kinds of desiring. I argue that desire, while often restricted from the domain of Intellect, is part and parcel of soul's existence as distinct from Intellect. Second, I will examine the connection of the soul to the body, in order to determine to what extent soul is distinct from the body. Last, I consider the ethical goal of the return as presented in the adaptation. There I argue that the return occurs by way of an individual soul's assimilation to universal soul and then to Intellect by way of imagination. This return stops within Intellect, instead of superseding Intellect to the First Cause. Last, I review Avicenna's consideration of these topics in his own commentary on the *ThA*.

## 1 Desire in Intellect

I begin by examining the notion of desire as it is found in the *Plotiniana Arabica* in general, in order to present the most relevant passages on the topic and to construct as coherent an account of desire from the text as possible. My goal is to set out what we read in the texts concerning the nature of desire, and in turn to offer a picture of desire within the entire system. I will argue that although desire is functional within the system, the adaptation of the *ThA* carefully delimits desire to the point of nearly excluding it from Intellect altogether and to mark it as a psychological phenomenon. By contrast, in passages on desire found in the so-called *GS*, desire extends to the Intellect in a way that is more whole-heartedly Plotinian. In the course of this examination, we will find that the adaptation only reluctantly ascribes desire to the Intellect, and instead ascribes desire primarily and inherently to soul, making soul a primary desiring, mobile agent. This result is in concordance with the adaptation's presentation of Intellect's goal, which is self-knowledge, rather than a unification with the higher principle, God.

In the previous chapter, I argued that Plotinus offered a foundational account of desire's function in Intellect. Thus, within any distinctly Neoplatonic system, there are three points at which one might expect desire to be present in Intellect. The first is the generation of Intellect from the One, the second is within the Intellect's own activity, and the third is Intellect's attempt to return to the One. As I will show below, we find desire ascribed to Intellect on the first point. However, the second and third points are conflated, and we see

desire in Intellect only insofar as the Intellect desires to know itself, and in this knowledge, to know its cause. The vocabulary used in the adaptation for Intellect's desire is concentrated, and primarily one finds variants of two roots: *r-w-d* and *š-w-q*, the former consistently used in Graeco-Arabic translation to render forms of βούλησις, and the latter used more broadly, for ὄρεξις and other terms. Variants of *š-w-q* will recur throughout the texts I examine, and here and in later chapters will form the basis for theories of conation.

One finds accounts of desire's role in the generation of Intellect from the One sparsely in the Arabic Plotinus materials, but there is explicit discussion of it in *DS* 98–112, which includes desire's role in Intellect's acts.[3] In regard to the first point, we read:

> When Intellect wishes (*irāda*) to know the sublime, which is alone, it casts itself upon it simply, and then becomes multiple and roams about in order to perceive it … Then the Intellect becomes multiple beside the sublime thing, which is alone, because when it wishes to know it, it casts itself upon it, as if it were vision, not as Intellect. For when Intellect is attached to the First Cause, which is only being, it is as it were endowed with vision and perception. It desires (*yaštāqu*) to see the First Cause, but can do so only with the eye of its sight, so it returns to itself, having become multiple through its roaming about and through much cogitation … Then Intellect becomes multiple, though that which was sought and desired (*al-maʿšūq*) does not become multiple.[4]

This is a familiar explanation, adapted from Plotinus's characterizations of Intellect's generation. In an effort to know its principle, Intellect makes itself multiple, since it is unable to grasp the purely simple One. There is no distinction between different moments in the generation of Intellect, although the emphasis on the fact that Intellect is made multiple acknowledges a conceptual progression from simplicity to multiplicity. Helpful on this point is *GS* 1.32–46. There one finds a clear claim that Intellect is without form before it attempts to think its cause. As a result, there are two distinct moments in the life of Intellect. "The first originated Intellect was not in possession of form. When it inclined to the first originator, it was the possessor of form because

3 *DS* 98–112, Henry–Schwyzer 321, Badawī 174–175. Cf. *Enn.* V.3(49).11–12. Intellect's generation is discussed also in *ThA* X.9–11, but not in terms of desiring.

4 *DS* 98–102, Henry–Schwyzer 321, Badawī 174. On the notion of roaming within Intellect see also *ThA* VIII.29–34, and for that passage cf. *Enn.* VI.7(38).13.28–40.

it came to an end. So it is shaped, and it is the possessor of shape and form."[5] The first state is a formless, inchoate state before Intellect inclined to the One, and the second is an informed, definite state after the Intellect is limited by the One. Considering this progression with respect to the notion of desire presented in *DS* 98ff. above, one finds that the inchoate Intellect inclines toward the One because it desires to know the One. By its vision, the Intellect makes itself multiple in its attempt to explicate the absolutely simple One.

Regarding the second and third aspects of desire in Intellect, the role of desire in the Intellect's own activity and in its potential return to the One, one finds that the two points are often conflated and the role of desire muted. There are several passages that assert Intellect's desire of the One.[6] The two most informative for our purposes are those that also contain discussion of the Intellect's desire for its own activity. One is found in *DS* 67, the other at the beginning of *ThA* I. The first discussion is set within an analysis of the nature of Intellect, specifically that Intellect is not found "outside" itself, and therefore is never fatigued in its activity. This discussion hinges partially on the Intellect's relation to the First Cause. The passage claims that, "The life of the Intellect is not one of fatigue, especially when it is a part of a whole that acts from outside. For it does not desire (*lā yaštāqu*) anything so as to be fatigued by its desire (*ištiyāquhū*) for it."[7] However, we find that following supposed objection: since the Intellect knows and therefore desires God (here assumed), it must be fatigued in this activity. There is an unstated, albeit interesting, assumption about the nature of desire revealed in this objection, namely, that it is fatiguing, rather than (or in addition to) say, being motivational in a constructive way. Further, we read that if the Intellect knows God it must also in this knowledge know itself (since knowledge and knower must be the same). What is primarily at issue is whether the Intellect is fatigued in its knowledge of God. However, both the imagined objector and the adaptor are concerned to show that Intellect's self-knowledge remain untouched. I include first the argument concerning Intellect's self-knowledge and knowledge of God before moving on to the argument about rest.

> If we concede to you that the Intellect knows and desires (*yaštāqu*) God exalted, we concede also that when it knows him it knows itself. For every power or knowledge that the Intellect possesses is given to it by that sub-

5 *GS* I.32, Henry–Schwyzer 475, Rosenthal, "Aš-Šayḫ al-Yūnānī," 486, my translation.

6 See *GS* IX.6, .12, Henry–Schwyzer 479–480 and 483–484, al-Šahrastānī, *Al-Milal wa-l-Niḥal*, 335 and 336. All specifications of *GS* IX refer to Lewis' numbering of al-Šahrastānī.

7 *DS* 67, Henry–Schwyzer 309, Badawī 172.

> lime and noble substance. And when the Intellect knows that it obtains every power it has, and every knowledge, from its cause, which is the cause of causes, it knows too that it is one of the gifts of that cause. Rather, it is the totality of the excellent gifts of God exalted. For it is knowledge and power and substance, and all these things are one in it, for it is Intellect. But although it is of this description, yet it is caused. If this is as we have described, and we concede that the Intellect knows God exalted, then it knows his powers too. And if the Intellect knows his powers, it knows itself too, because it is one of his powers. If the Intellect does not have the power to know God almighty utterly—for there knowledge and the known are one—then in this respect Intellect will fall short.[8]

First, notice it is taken as already granted that Intellect knows God. (There is no argument for this claim in the lines I provided since the claim is brought in as granted by the hypothetical objector.) The closest thing one finds to an argument for the claim is the point that if Intellect is unable to know God with the utmost knowledge, then Intellect will be deficient, the assumption being that Intellect is not deficient, such that it must know God. The argument concerning the connection between Intellect's knowledge of God and its knowledge of itself goes as follows. When Intellect knows that every power or knowledge is a gift from God, it knows that it must be one of these gifts or powers. When Intellect knows itself and sees its nature as containing all knowledge, power, and substance together as one, it knows that it must be the totality of the gifts or powers from God, since Intellect knows itself as comprising *all* of those gifts. Since it is granted that Intellect knows God, the adaptation teases out what that process would be like. Knowledge of God entails knowledge of God's powers, and the Intellect comes to know these powers through its own process of self-realization. The result is essentially that Intellect's knowledge of God and its own self-knowledge are co-extensive, something reiterated in the following passage, which directly follows the one above.

> We say that rest befits nothing so much as Intellect. But in Intellect, rest is not an emergence from Intellect but an activity resting from all exterior things. The proof is that every agent, when performing its action, is at rest from all the other things which it is not doing, especially the agent which is not in potentiality but in actuality, and it has no intermediary between

8 *DS* 68–74, Henry–Schwyzer 309, Badawī 172. Cf. *Enn.* V.3(49).6.35–7.20.

> itself and its action. If it is of this description, it performs its action only looking at itself and in itself, not outside, so that it is acting while at rest from the things that are outside it.[9]

The objection that Intellect would be fatigued in its knowledge of God is settled insofar as Intellect's rest must be understood, we are told, as rest from things outside of it, and since its activity is *in* itself, it is at rest, and therefore not fatigued. As a result, knowledge of God is simply an intensification of the knowledge Intellect has of itself, and Intellect is not fatigued in this knowledge of God. The part of the objection based on *desire* is neither acknowledged nor addressed. The desire of Intellect returns only in the passages I examined above, which detail Intellect's generation. Even there, Intellect does not itself desire, but only the pre-Intellectual vision.

This point is a unique and significant departure from the Plotinian account of the relation between the second and first hypostases. In this account from *DS*, unity between Intellect and the One is not an assimilation by way of formlessness, but a radical act of self-knowing, self-knowledge in the Plotinian context being the initial cause of Intellect's *divergence* from the One, not the path of return. This account of the conclusion of Intellect's desire for God is echoed in our next passage, which occurs at the very beginning of the *ThA*, where we read of the nature of intellectual substance.

> We say that every substance that is intellectual alone possesses intellectual life and is impassive, and therefore the substance reposes in the world of Intellect, fixed in it and perpetual, not departing from it or proceeding to another place, because it has no place towards which to move from its own place, nor does it desire (*lā yaštāqu*) any place other than its own.[10]

There are two points of overlap between this passage and the above passage from *DS*. The first is the claim that Intellect does not desire a new place, and the second that it does not depart from its own place to another, that is, that is does not go outside of itself. Important to these claims is the qualification that the substance in question is intellectual substance alone. The following passage contrasts this substance with intellectual substance that *is* endowed with desire for another place.

---

9 *DS* 75–76, Henry–Schwyzer 309–311, Badawī 172–173.

10 *ThA* I.2, Henry–Schwyzer 219, Badawī 18–19. Cf. *Enn.* IV.7(2).13.2–4.

> Every intellectual substance that has a certain desire (*šawq mā*) is posterior to the substance that is Intellect alone, with no desire. When the Intellect acquires a desire, it proceeds because of that desire in a certain direction and does not abide in its original place, for it desires greatly to act and to adorn the things that it has seen in the Intellect … When the Intellect is informed by the form of desire (*bi-ṣūrat al-šawq*), it desires to bring out into actuality the form that is in it, and it longs greatly for that, and the birth-pangs seize it and it brings it forth into actuality because of its desire for the sensible world. When the Intellect receives the desire to go downward, the soul is fashioned by it and the soul is then an Intellect fashioned by the form of desire, although the soul has sometimes a universal desire (*šawqan kulliyyan*) and sometimes a particular desire (*šawqan juz'iyyan*).[11]

We have a distinction between the intellectual substance that is Intellect itself, alone with no desire, and an intellectual substance that is posterior to it, endowed with desire and because of that led to go outside of Intellect. This description of Intellect with *no* desire is stronger than the claims we found in *DS*, which at least conceded that Intellect initially desires God. The passage also translates Plotinus's discussion of the fact that there is no ὄρεξις in Intellect. As will become clearer as we proceed, the decision to translate multiple Greek terms with one Arabic word obfuscated the subtlety of the Greek original. The intellectual substance with the proclivity toward the sensible world is identified as soul. This passage is particularly challenging, given that the progression and stages are not immediately clear. In fact, Cristina D'Ancona has remarked on the apparent inconsistency of this passage, noting that there appear to be two inconsistent claims concerning the presence of soul in Intellect. The first "impl[ies] that when Intellect plus desire proceeds downwards, soul already exists as such," while the second "maintain[s] that soul *is* the same as Intellect plus desire."[12] She remarks that the adaptor's struggle reflects a difficulty within the Plotinian original, namely the opaque relationship between Intellect and World Soul. On this point she is certainly correct. Further, I think this point is true for most of the adaptation, perhaps more than is appreciated. Where there is a philosophical difficulty in the adaptation, there is often a lack of clarity in Plotinus's own words. However, I am not as inclined to read these particular remarks simply as inconsistent, since I think the lack of clarity is also due to the

11 *ThA* I.3–5, Henry–Schwyzer 219, Badawī 19. Cf. *Enn.* IV.7(2).13.4–10.

12 D'Ancona Costa, "Porphyry, Universal Soul," 75, italics hers.

nature of intelligible substance. Since it is incorporeal, intelligible substance can fully assimilate to another intelligible substance, and this assimilation is what happens, for example, in the process of becoming virtuous and returning to Intellect. Because of this nature, soul, fully assimilated to Intellect, would not functionally be other than Intellect until it had the impetus to leave. Rather than being inconsistent, the passages might reveal the progression of soul's differentiation from Intellect. Such a reading is further supported by a passage from *ThA* VII, where we read that soul is better off having descended to the sensible world, since if it had not, it would not have known its powers, which were hidden while it was in Intellect.[13] I discuss this passage in detail below, but what is relevant here is the claim that when soul is assimilated to Intellect, it is functionally not distinct from it, so much so that soul does not know its own powers.

The progression of the soul's separation is three-fold. First, there is, with Intellect, an intellectual substance that has a certain desire. Second, this intellectual substance comes about upon the initial reception of this desire. It is only once this desire develops that soul is informed, that is, fashioned in a way that is distinct from Intellect itself. Third, on account of this desire, this substance proceeds outward from the place of Intellect in order to generate what it has seen in Intellect. Intellect, properly speaking, has no desire. I have shown that this claim is mitigated in other passages, but it is worth noting that in the *ThA* specifically, there is a strong distinction between Intellect alone without desire, and Intellect desiring, which is soul. In fact, even though both are intellectual substances, only that which is intellectual substance *alone* is without desire, as if intellectual substance with desire is somehow an impure intellectual substance.

Even in passages that elaborate on the Intellect's desire for the One, the adaptation goes to lengths to explain that Intellect's desire for the One is formal. The most explicit passage in which we find Intellect described as desiring is in the portion of *GS* transmitted by al-Šahrastānī and included by Lewis as *GS* IX. There, we find the following characterization of the first principle.

> He is beloved and an object of desire (*maḥbūban maʿšūqan*) of the high and low forms. The forms of all things have a desire for him, because he is their creator and, through his generosity, clothed them with the shape of existence. He is primeval and permanently unchanging. The lover yearns

13 *ThA* VII.2–4, Henry–Schwyzer 243, Badawī 84.

> to reach him and to be with him. The first beloved has many lovers … The desire of the first intellect for the first creator is more intense than the desire of the other things, because all other things are below it … All forms need him and have a desire for Him, because every form seeks and longs for the person who formed it.[14]

The description of Intellect's desire ends here, but although Intellect has a desire for the first creator, we find that it, and the desire of all other things, is formal desire, consonant with the formal and rational depiction of desire found throughout the Arabic Plotinus materials. Nevertheless, there are clear remnants here of the Plotinian notion of desire that is due to the need one has for one's cause, although this point is here stated in personal or religious terms.

The reticence to ascribe desire to Intellect seems to be an attempt to maintain Intellect's immutability and eternal activity. As I will show below, the immutable and perfect character of Intellect remains a priority throughout the Arabic Plotinus materials. One important consequence of this emphasis is that the relation between Intellect and the One is conceived as a relationship between Intellects. As will become clear throughout the chapter, there is no allowance for a unification of Intellect to the One by way of receptive assimilation, that is, there is no return of Intellect to the One. Further, Intellect's adjacency—bordering on continuousness—to God or the One may in itself be enough to ward off an attribution of desire to Intellect.

## 2 Soul's Desire of Intellect

As in the discussion of Intellect and desire, one finds desire operative at the same three points within soul: its generation, its activity, and its return. The role of desire in the soul's return to Intellect is discussed frequently, and, as I will show in the last section of this chapter, it plays a formative role in the conception of the ethical paradigm we find in the Arabic Plotinus materials. The vocabulary of soul's desire is extensive. Although verbs from *š-w-q* are most common, one finds frequently forms of *ḥ-r-ṣ*, to desire or strive. The connotation of the terminology of soul's desire is further from the willing of Intellect and closer to a passionate desire or love, evidenced by forms of *h-w-y* and *ʿa-š-q* peppered through the adaptation.[15]

14 *GS* IX.12, Henry–Schwyzer 483–484, al-Šahrastānī 332.

15 See, e.g., *ThA* VI.54 and *ThA* IX.74.

The best place to examine the role of desire in the generation of soul is also the beginning of *ThA* 1. Above, I laid out the presentation of soul as an intellectual substance that proceeds from Intellect either with a universal desire or a particular desire.[16] The discussion continues in explanation of the difference between these two desires.

> When the soul has a universal desire she fashions the universal forms into actuality and governs them intellectually and universally, without departing from her universal world. When she desires the particular things, which are forms of her universal forms, she adorns them and increases them in purity and beauty, and corrects what error has occurred in them, and governs them in a higher and loftier way than their proximate cause, which is the heavenly bodies.[17]

After soul proceeds from Intellect "informed with the form of desire," this desire surfaces either universally or particularly. The universal desire spurs the creation of universal forms, but the particular desire, which is for particular things that are themselves forms of soul's universal forms, prompts the soul to improve the forms that already exist. It is clear here that the heavenly bodies play an intermediary role between soul and physical particulars. Interestingly, soul's generation is accounted for only through the appearance of desire. Before there is desire in Intellect, soul is not present as a distinct substance, and soul itself is only an extension of Intellect once desire enters the picture. So far that is true to the Plotinian original. However, the emphasis on a *form* of desire is a marked change from the original Plotinian account of generation. Although the adaptation allows for a formless beginning of Intellect, such a beginning is denied soul, since soul begins with a form. Even more remarkable is that this form is one of *desire*. As a result, the soul is still fundamentally a desiring agent, with a difference in the nature of that desire. This *formal* desire spurs soul's generation and activity, and one finds elsewhere that this desire is always rational and defined.

In *GS* 1.64, we read that each soul has an intellectual desire for Intellect. "The particular, singular souls desire the intellect intellectually (*šawqan ʿaqliyyan*), and strive for attachment, adherence and reversion to it."[18] This claim is sit-

16 *ThA* 1.5, Henry–Schwyzer 219, Badawī 19.

17 *ThA* 1.6, Henry–Schwyzer 219, Badawī 19.

18 *GS* 1.64, Henry–Schwyzer 237, Wakelnig 108. References to the passages not included by Rosenthal in his trio of articles are to the text as edited by Elvira Wakelnig in her edition of

uated within a broader discussion of the relation between soul and Intellect, specifically the capacity of soul to remain in Intellect.

> For the many souls do not depart from the universal soul or that noble, elevated position, but always remain there, together with the universal soul, as long as they remain in themselves, i.e. as long as they desire the universal things, and direct and rule them together with the universal soul.[19]

The return to Intellect is motivated by a desire to be with Intellect, and, in the previous passage we read, this desire is intellectual in nature. The motivation for emphasizing the intellectual nature of this desire stems both from the defined nature of soul I highlighted above, and from the nature of the object of the soul's desire, which is Intellect. The return of soul to Intellect is echoed in *ThA* VIII.75, where we read that soul always desires to move upward, back to Intellect.

> Even though soul has descended from above to below, the soul is not obliged to descend to every depth or to move ever downward … no, it finishes at one of the beings and stops there, and it does not stop desiring to emerge from it upwards until it becomes superior to every being in which it was in the first state.[20]

Here again one finds that the soul desires to leave its association with particular bodies and return to its higher state in Intellect. This passage is within a discussion of memory and the ascent of soul upward, where the soul's ascent to Intellect happens because it, "desires (*irādat*) knowledge of the world of Intellect," and that once "soul is in the intelligible world, it does not need to raise its gaze upward."[21] The claim that surfaces in this discussion is that although soul might desire to move upward and revert back to God, the desire stops once the soul reaches Intellect.

However, there are passages in which we find broader claims regarding the soul's desire for the One. In *ThA* IX.74, one finds a claim that the soul, supported by the first cause, longs to go back to it: "To him do we cling, towards

---

the Oxford MS Marsh 539: Wakelnig, *A Philosophy Reader*. Translations are also from Wakelnig, unless otherwise noted.

19 *GS* I.68, Henry–Schwyzer 237, Wakelnig 108.

20 *ThA* VIII.75, Henry–Schwyzer 77, Badawī 104.

21 *ThA* VIII.66 and 68, Henry–Schwyzer 75, Badawī 102.

him is our desire, to him do we incline, and to him do we return."[22] Further, in *GS* IX, there are multiple passages that claim the soul desires the Good beyond Intellect, and toward the end of *DS*, soul's desire is divided into two kinds, one for the sensible and one for the Good.[23] I quote the latter in full here.

> And this desire—I mean the sensory desire (*al-šawq al-ḥissī*)—is a secondary desire, not the first desire, because it sees the object of desire only by the sense of sight. Therefore, it is a secondary desire. The first desire (*al-šawq al-awwal*), which is not perceived by the senses, is higher and nobler than every desire, and prior to every desire. It is the good, such that no possible road can lead up to anything else above it, so that one might desire anything higher. Therefore, all who attain this First Pure Good (*al-ḫayr al-awwal al-maḥḍ*) are satisfied with it, and stop, and seek nothing else beyond it, having travelled to the horizon of things and the goal of all goals.[24]

In *DS* 209, the First Pure Good is identified as the cause of Intellect, and therefore here that after which all things long clearly is the Good beyond Intellect, not Intellect itself. It is not immediately clear in what way one ought to reconcile this passage with claims in other versions of the adaptation, specifically from the *ThA*, that soul reaches Intellect alone and stops. This reconciliation is further problematized by the fact that there is a lacuna in the text shortly after the above passage. However, if one considers the passage that picks up after the lacuna, one finds again a conflation of the ascension to Intellect with an ascension to the Good, suggesting that the passage in question ought to be read in the same way as those that clearly state the soul's fulfillment in Intellect. In *DS* 229–234, we find the three different classes of people, and the text specifies that in which the highest class finds its satisfaction.

> [People in the third class] are those who have risen up from the depths to the heights, and have seen the radiating light by the superior, penetrating, and keen power within them, so that they have come to be above the clouds and are raised up over the effluvium of earth, which fogs intellects.

22 *ThA* IX.74, Henry–Schwyzer 287, Badawī 130–131.

23 *GS* IX.6, .12, Henry–Schwyzer 479–480 and 483–484, al-Šahrastānī 335 and 336.

24 *DS* 219–221, Henry–Schwyzer 357, Badawī 182. Mention of *al-ḫayr al-awwal al-maḥḍ* obviously brings to mind the Arabic adaptation of Proclus's *Elements of Theology*.

> There they have stopped, contented, and have rejected all things, taking a surpassing delight in that place, which is the true place, suited to the superior ones of mankind.[25]

There are, I think, two points in favor of reading this passage as claiming that the individual's goal is Intellect, not the Good. First is the claim that the individuals see the radiating light. The Good is certainly the *cause* of this light, although it itself is not the light. To see the radiating light of the Good is simply to see Intellect.[26] Second, that the individual aims at the true *place* is also suggestive of Intellect as the goal.[27] Not only is Intellect said to be a place (characteristic of the second hypostasis), the specification that the place is beyond the sensible, specifically beyond the higher atmosphere, is suggestive that the reference here is Intellect, which comes next in the ascent, not the Good. The result is an account of desire and its end that is consistent with a passage like *ThA* VIII.75 and with the account of the desire of Intellect. Since Intellect knows the Good as an extension of its own self-knowledge, the conflation of the goal of soul's desire ought not be too surprising. As a result, the goal of soul's return is Intellect, and not something that is beyond it in any meaningful way.

Further, given the difference in the two genetic accounts of Intellect and Soul, we find a difference in the very *nature* of the desire they do possess, namely, that it is never explicitly formless like that which we find in Plotinus's own text. This change is due to the fact that the object of the two hypostases in the Arabic adaptations is no longer a formless Good, but Intellect and form. Even in the case of Intellect's desire, it is fully satisfied with the forms given to it, and we find little to no trace of formlessness. Soul moves through a form of desire toward universal and particular forms. The substantial presence of desire changes in the *Plotiniana Arabica*, as it is always or for the most part rationally defined. Thus, the relation between desire and goodness in the *Plotiniana Arabica* is fundamentally rational, since the desire is both formally defined, directed to formal aspects of the world, and stops in Intellect's activity. The desire for goodness, part of the substance of soul, also expresses itself rationally or formally. Nevertheless, desire is still part of soul's substance, and the notion of soul itself is also changed in the transmission of the text. Desire is nonetheless the realization of soul as such, for we have seen throughout this section that

25 *DS* 233–234, Henry–Schwyzer 411, Badawī 183. Cf. *Enn.* V.9(5).1.1–20.

26 See *ThA* VIII.114, Henry–Schwyzer 269, Badawī 110 for the world of Intellect as the world of light.

27 On the notion of two places, see the debated "Treatise on the Two Worlds," translated and edited by Rosenthal, "Aš-Šayḫ al-Yûnânî (Concluded)," 42–66.

soul, were we to define it, is simply Intellect plus desire. Thus, I think we may safely say that desire is inherent and essential to soul in the adaptation, and, as in the original text, the nature of soul's desire is connected to the Good in kind. The difference is that now this Good has been conflated with Intellect and its forms, and thus soul's desire correspondingly reflects its nature. When considering on what grounds the notion of desire has changed from a ubiquitous, metaphysically functional conception to one that is primarily bound to soul, one might consider the translation of the Greek terms into Arabic. Upon examination of the translation of ἔφεσις and ὄρεξις from Greek into Arabic, one finds a terminological and in turn conceptual, and more importantly, *functional* conflation. I remarked above that in a passage from *ThA* I, translated from IV.7(2).13, a refusal to ascribe any desire to Intellect was due, in part, to the fact that Plotinus in the original was denying ὄρεξις of Intellect, but not desire full stop. Upon examination of the three existing collections of Plotinus's text, I found that in each text, variants of *š-w-q* translated ἔφεσις and ὄρεξις.[28] As a result, the distinction between the two terms, along with their philosophical differences and nuances, is obfuscated to the point of being lost altogether.

## 3 Soul and Body's Desire

Soul's relation to bodily desire is of paramount importance for ethics, and in the adaptation we find careful distinction between bodily desire and other kinds of desire. One of the ways the distinction is made is through a specific vocabulary for the desires of the body, just as Plotinus uses ἐπιθυμία almost always to denote bodily appetite. We do not find the same roots that denote Intellect or soul's desire; instead, we read almost exclusively *š-h-w*, connoting desire in the sense of lust or appetite. In one place there is a verb from *r-w-m*, and *ḥ-r-ṣ* is also used to denote a positive or upward-facing instance of bodily desire.

We find desire related to the body in two ways. First, desire is ascribed to matter. Second, bodily desire is described as something that is in addition to and capable of working against psychological desire. The only passage in which it is said that matter desires is found in *GS* IX. There, we find a summary of a view of matter and form that is based on a reading of the myth of Penia and Poros from Plato's *Symposium*. The text describes matter in the following way.

28 The following are the examples to which I refer. Ἔφεσις translated with *š-w-q*: IV.4(28).16.25 to Ceph. 58 of *ThA*; This same passage, IV.4(28).16.25 to *GS* IX.6; V.5(32).12.17 to *DS* 220. Ὄρεξις translated with *š-w-q*: IV.7(2).13.4 to *ThA* I.3; V.3(49).6.39 to *DS* 67; VI.7(38).42.12 to *GS* IX.9.

> Your mother is desiring (*rawm*) but she is poor and fickle. Your father is young but he is generous and measured. He means by 'mother' matter and by 'father' form. By 'desiring' [he means] matter's pliability, and by 'poverty' [he means] its need for form, and by fickleness [he means] the paucity of its stability in what it obtains.[29]

The terms and description are taken from the myth, but explicated in physical terms, and is generally similar to *Enn*. III.5(50).9. The desiring mother is identified as matter itself. In addition to desiring, two other qualities are ascribed to the mother, poverty and fickleness, which he in turn interprets as matter's need for form and its lack of stability, specifically, its incapacity to hold onto the form that it receives. The attribution of desire to matter reveals a further aspect of the inherent model of desire in the text. It also solidifies the fact that in the adaptation desire really is saved only for things related to the material world. This account of matter is consonant with the Plotinian account, in both that it is incapable of holding onto the form it receives and that it is itself a desiring aspect of the systematic world structure. Nevertheless, the fact that otherwise there is evidence only of *Enn*. IV–VI in Arabic, combined with the availability of Plotinus's source (*Phys*. I.9), makes it difficult to determine whether this is an inheritance from Plotinus specifically. Interestingly, the term used to denote desire, *rawm*, seems to be used only here. There could be different factors responsible for this distinct word choice. One may wonder whether the vocabulary selection is particular to al-Šahrastānī's transmission, and although we find this term only in al-Šahrastānī's attestations of the *Sayings*, there is elsewhere in his attestation the standard terminology for desire, such as forms of *šawq*. One must also take into account al-Šahrastānī's own procedure of transmitting texts and doctrines, which included not a little of his own reworking and interpretation. In addition, it is also only in al-Šahrastānī's text that we find a passage ascribing desire to matter, so that one cannot compare his terminology here to another philosophically similar passage. It is not unlikely that *rawm*, which has the connotation of coveting, is selected in order to distinguish the desire appropriate to matter from the desire of higher substances, such as that proper to soul or Intellect. A negative connotation marked

29 *GS* IX, al-Šahrastānī 1, Henry–Schwyzer 478, al-Šahrastānī 334, my translation. Cf. *Enn*. III.5(50).6, .9, as well as III.6(26).14, .19, and I.8(51).3. Although this passage sounds similar to parts of *Enn*. III.5(50).9, it is difficult to determine, especially given the prevalence of Aristotle's *Physics*, and its remarks in I.9, where we read, "But matter is that which is desiring (*tatašawwaqu*), like the female desires the male, and the ugly desires the beautiful." See Badawī, *Arisṭu ʿinda l-ʿArab*, 74.

by terminological distinction is maintained in the accounts of desire (*šahwa*) that is proper to *bodies*, so that there is reason to expect such a distinction to be made for matter as well.

Although the ascription of desire to matter occurs in only one place, there is much further discussion of desire within the body compound. Bodily desire is discussed in three aspects: first, in terms of bodies' desire to be in soul; second, in immediate relation to soul; and third, as somatically operative. I present the passages in this progression in order to make clear the possibility that the desire of matter is operative within bodies and the natural world. In an argument against materialists in *ThA* IX, we find an argument for the ontological priority of soul over body.

> [The materialists] make [soul's] place breath and fire, for they are both more fine and subtle than other bodies, whereas they ought to have said that it is the bodies that desire (*taḥriṣu*) to seek a place to be in, and establish themselves within the powers of the soul, the soul being the place of the bodies, and their subsistence and their endurance being in her.[30]

The reason that bodies desire and seek soul's powers is that they gain subsistence and endurance from those powers, since bodies do not have these qualities on their own. This desire, *ḥirṣ*, has a positive aim, that is, it directs body toward soul in an effort to put itself into better state. In this way, bodies' desire to be in soul is analogous to the desire of matter that accounts for its pliability and leads to its acceptance of form and stability. This desire echoes body's desire for the better that I examined in the previous chapter.

This passage may be contrasted with *ThA* III.73, which presents the second aspect of bodily desire. Here we find arguments rallied against the identification of soul with the natural form of the body, that is, against the Aristotelian definition of the soul as the *entelecheia* of the body. The adaptation highlights the distinction between the desires of bodies and the soul that works *against* those desires. "We say that if the soul were a natural form of perfection, it would not oppose the body in its appetites (*fi šahawātihī*) and many of its activities, indeed it would not oppose it in anything at all." The point of the passage is to highlight the incoherence of the *entelecheia* theory of soul, but it also reveals a distinct sort of desire proper to a particular ensouled body. This conception of desire is clarified in *ThA* VII.43–44, where the relation of soul to body and its desire is distinguished further.

30 *ThA* IX. 54, Henry–Schwyzer 187, Badawī 128. Cf. *Enn.* IV.7(2).6–7.

> We can sense the intelligible world and what the soul brings us from it only when we rise above this world and reject its base appetites and do not occupy ourselves with anything of its condition. Then we can sense it and the thing which descends on us from it through the medium of soul, while we cannot sense the thing that comes to be in one of the parts of the soul before that comes over the whole soul, such as appetite (*šahwa*), for we cannot sense it so long as it remains fixed in the appetitive power of the soul.[31]

Here there is clear characterization of bodily desires, *šahawāt*, which he says stem from the appetitive, *šahwānīyya*, power, as instances of a unique type of desire. This type of desire is proper to the bodily compound (to "this world"), and distinct from the desire of soul and from the desire of matter and pre-compound body. The specification that the appetite cannot remain fixed in the appetitive power is curious, and the text continues by offering an explanation: "We sense [the appetite] when it proceeds to the sensory power and to the cogitative and intellective power, but before it enters these two powers, we do not sense it, even though it remain there a long while."[32] This statement offers a clear account of an inherent desire that does not need aid from sensation or intellection to exist. However, the unusual part is that the appetite exists and we can be unaware of it. This account rests on the fact that soul is separate from the body and capable of moving its attention to the world of Intellect or to the world of sense. In fact, this passage portrays nicely the extent of the intellectualism of the Arabic Plotinus materials—the soul itself can have an appetite of which it is unaware, since the soul can more or less shut down the powers that exist relative to the body. This portrayal is a stark departure from an Aristotelian account, which I will examine in the next chapter.

The third way in which the adaptation discusses bodily desire concerns the activity of desire within the body. He discusses this in *GS* VII, which is quite short and almost entirely dedicated to a discussion of nutritive desire.

> The growing power is spread through the whole body. All limbs of the body, therefore, feel pleasure and pain. The same applies to appetite, because it belongs to the sphere of the growing power. There is no limb in the body in which appetite is not growing. Aches and pleasures are proof of that. Each limb feels pain and pleasure. Pain and pleasure belong to

31 *ThA* VII.43–44, Henry–Schwyzer 249, Badawī 90–91. Cf. *Enn.* IV.8(6).8.5–6.

32 *ThA* VII.44, Henry–Schwyzer 249, Badawī 91.

> the category of appetite. When a limb attains its appetite, it feels pleasure. When it does not, it has pain, because the appetite is lacking.[33]

We find a stronger connection between *šahawāt* and what is now called the growing power. This power, which is spread throughout the body, is responsible for desire, which grows along with the growing power. Even though it is "in the sphere of" the growing power eventually ruled by soul, this appetite does not necessarily begin in soul. In *GS* VII.6, the connection between the desire produced by this power and the body is further specified.

> Anger belongs to the realm of the growing soul, for it is the growing soul which makes the body sensitive to painful things and lets the body have bile and blood. Wherever appetite (*al-šahwa*) is, there is anger, and wherever anger exists, there is appetite.[34]

Anger is an analogue to the appetite, and both come about when the growing power makes a body sensitive. At the end of *GS* VII we read that there is a direct correlation between one's capacity to control one's appetite, and one's capacity to control one's anger, since appetites, *šahawāt*, are bodily, and anger is their agent. Insofar as one is in control of one's appetites, this control has an immediate effect on the influence of body. Although the desire of matter is for form and what is better than itself, once matter becomes body through the influence of soul, its desire becomes a distraction. This distraction is dangerous, because, as we will see in a moment, the soul needs to keep its gaze focused upward and to restrain its desire to a universal desire, lest it become weak.

In general, there emerged from this analysis an account of desire in which desire is restricted primarily to the soul, such that desire in Intellect is sated and desire in body ought to be sated or rejected. Further, we saw the extent to which, on multiple levels, the adaptation incorporates the inherent desire of the original. Desire is systematically present in the generation of the different hypostases, but its permanent role in the system is not as extensive as that found in the original Plotinian text. Rather, within the Arabic Plotinus materials, soul alone acts as a mobile, desiring agent that endeavors to return to God. However, the nature of that desire is definitively changed. Rather than a non-rational, formless connection between the entire system and the Good, one finds a permeating formal desire to know Intellect. Formless desire plays

---

33 *GS* VII.1–2, Henry–Schwyzer 113, Franz Rosenthal, "Aš-Šayḫ al-Yūnānī (Continued)," 378–379, slightly altered. Cf. *Enn.* IV.4(28).28.10–13.

34 *GS* VII.6, Henry–Schwyzer 113, Wakelnig 286, slightly altered.

a role only in the generation of Intellect. Further, the conflation of Intellect's self-knowledge and the knowledge of the One appears to lead to a truncated version of the return to the One, insofar as returning to Intellect seems to be the end point for one's return to the One. Let us now turn to examine in what way that return happens.

## 4 Assimilation and the Ethical Implications of Soul's Procession

In this section, I will examine the ethical framework of the *Plotiniana Arabica*, in order to identify the ethical process and goal of the human soul. I will argue that soul's assimilation to Intellect occurs progressively, since soul must first assimilate to universal soul. Both kinds of assimilation happen by imagination, although assimilation to Intellect occurs by way of a higher form of imagination than that directed by memory. Second, I argue that the goal in the return is a unification with Intellect, rather than the First Cause. I highlight here that the insistence in other places that we return to God is consonant theologically rather than philosophically, and that the adaptation's locution regarding a higher place of return mimics Quranic usage. In the end, I argue that since the account that emerges from the *Plotiniana Arabica* has soul as a fundamentally desiring agent rationally determined, the ensuing ethical end we find is thoroughly rationalist, and lacks any aspects related to Plotinus's original account of formless desire for the Good.

Neoplatonic schemata do not always depict the procession of soul away from Intellect in positive terms. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the moral assessment of the departure of Soul from Intellect in Plotinus's thought is mixed, with Soul at times receiving blame for leaving Intellect, and at times being commended for aiding in the betterment of the world. In the adaptation, there are indeed passages in which Soul's descent is spoken of negatively. In fact, in *ThA* VII Soul's descent is spoken of in several ways. In *ThA* VII.10, one finds that the soul descended "to make manifest her noble actions and power, and this is concomitant to every nature."[35] But at the beginning of *ThA* VII, Soul's descent is described in more explicitly moralizing terms.

> We say that the noble, ruling soul, although it departed its higher world and descended to this lower world, does this by a sort of its ability and its higher power, in order that it form essences, which are after it, and governs

35 *ThA* VII.10, Henry–Schwyzer 243, Badawī 85.

> them. And if it slips away from this world after its shaping and governing of it, and proceeds to its world quickly, then its descent to this world does not harm it [at all], but rather it benefits by it. This is because it acquired from this world knowledge of something, and it knew what [that world's] nature is after it poured out its power over it, and its noble, motionless deeds and activities, which are in it and in the intellectual world, became visible.[36]

The point that soul is not damaged if it returns quickly to its own world without extended engagement in the sensible world is a straightforward concept immediately adapted from the parallel Plotinian text. More pronounced is the suggestion that the soul *benefits* by such an engagement (although soul's knowledge of its power through its descent is explicitly stated in the Plotinian text). The explanation of this benefit is indeed the knowledge gained by soul, knowledge of the sensible world and, as is made clear below, knowledge of itself. There is a further suggestion that this knowledge would not happen without soul's expression and endeavor into the sensible world, since its powers and acts were quiet while it stayed with Intellect. The idea that the soul is quiet within Intellect is not necessarily new—recall the lack of distinction between soul and Intellect before soul is informed by desire in *ThA* I, where one finds that soul properly speaking is not differentiated from Intellect *until* it makes a move away from it. Still, it is unclear why the soul need have self-knowledge in the first place. Given that unification with Intellect is the ideal and goal (even here, the adaptation implies that soul ought to return quickly), it needs to be made explicit what the negative consequences of soul's permanent assimilation to the Intellect could be. This is done in the following passage.

> If it were not that [soul] manifested its activities and poured out its powers and made it as something falling under vision, then these powers and activities in it would be in vain and the soul would have forgotten [its] wise and perfect virtues and effects, since [they] would be hidden, [and] not be visible. If this were so, soul would not know its power, and it would not know its nobility. This is because the activity is only the manifestation of the hidden power making itself visible. Were the power of soul hidden and not made visible, it would be empty (*fasadat*) and it would be as if it never were at all.[37]

36 *ThA* VII.1–2, Henry–Schwyzer 243, Badawī 84, my translation.

37 *ThA* VII.3–4, Henry–Schwyzer 243, Badawī 84, my translation. Cf. *Enn.* IV.8(6).5.31–35.

The negative understanding of soul's permanent assimilation to Intellect is explained on two fronts. First, it is said that soul would not know its wise and perfect virtues and effects. Second, it is said that soul would "be empty and … be as if it never were at all." This passage is remarkable, specifically the last claim, that had soul not made its power manifest by way of its attention to the lower world, that power would be void and in turn it would be as if it never even existed. The root *f-s-d* does, of course, mean to be decayed, corrupt, or rotten. But it also means simply to be null, void, or empty. I think it must be this last meaning that the adaptor had in mind, and the most natural understanding given that it occurs within a discussion of power. In this case, if the soul's power were hidden and not made manifest, such power would become futile and be as if it had never existed simply because it would have no effects. Recalling *ThA* I, it is clear that the criterion of soul's distinction from Intellect as its effective *difference* from Intellect is replicated in this passage. This criterion in itself is not far from a Plotinian account of soul's relation to Intellect. The assimilation of non-physical substances to other non-physical substances is certainly something Plotinus accepts. Given the adaptation's criterion for soul's differentiation, it is not surprising that it would draw out the inevitable implication of soul's non-descent. Without descending, soul's power ceases to have any efficacy and in turn any meaning for the system.[38]

By contrast, the soul's descent is said to be good not simply because it may be efficacious, but because the soul *learns* something. Although it is a bit ambiguous in what way knowledge of the sensible world would help soul, it is clear that the soul's knowledge of its own power and virtue is the presumed good. Perhaps, analogous to the way in which Intellect's knowledge of its own power was its highest state or goal, the benefit of self-knowledge is an unspoken assumption here. A further assumption seems to be that actuality is better than potency, and by extension that actualizing one's powers is better than not doing so. In this passage, then, we find two accounts of the moral status of soul's descent, both as if it were morally neutral since it is in its nature to descend, and as if the descent in itself were good since it actualizes the soul's potential and offers it an opportunity for self-knowledge. Conversely, there is an argument that the *lack* of a descent by soul would be bad for it, since it would in effect cease to exist. Overall, the account of soul's descent here is remarkably positive, since it gives a positive motivation for soul to descend, rather than only a value-neutral or a negative one.

38 This point is analogous to the argument in *DS* 68–74 regarding Intellect and its non-identity to the One.

However, one finds a negative analysis of soul when it comes to its assimilation to the sensory world. There are two discussions of this assimilation. One is found in *GS* I, and the other in *ThA* IX. Both passages concern assimilation to the Intellect as the way to the attainment of virtue, and contrast this assimilation with the assimilation to the sensory. The first is *GS* I.78.

> In the measure that soul's gaze is extended to Intellect, the virtues in it are greater and more apparent, and in the measure that its gaze is extended to the body, the virtues are smaller and more concealed, until there is sometimes no differentiation between it and sensation, on account of the intensity of its connection with it and its distance from the Intellect.[39]

The passage immediately following *ḥattā* concerning the relation between soul and the sensory has been rendered by Lewis as follows: "So much so that sometimes there is no distinction between her and *the body*," reading *al-ḥiss* as *al-jism*. D'Ancona and Wakelnig both follow Lewis in this reading. However, it is not clear to me that this reading is philosophically more sensible, nor is it clear that it is reasonable for one to accidentally write *al-ḥiss* after *al-jism* appears in the previous line, while *al-ḥiss* does not appear in the preceding lines. (Although the skeleton of the two words could appear very much the same.) In her commentary on this passage, D'Ancona says that the lines in question—emended to read, "there is no difference between the soul and the body"—are an interpolation intended to harmonize the Aristotelian account of soul with the Plotinian one.[40] I am not inclined to accept this interpretation, since it assumes this purpose. Aristotle is not mentioned in the pages preceding or following this passage, and the discussion is clearly a Plotinian one regarding the relation between the body and soul. I would rather take the manuscript as it stands, for *al-ḥiss* not only follows the text, but is, in my view, philosophically sounder, since soul by its very nature *cannot* be physical. Sensation is only one of the many activities for which soul is responsible, but it is an activity that brings soul close to the body. Understanding the passage in terms of sensation, the claim that there is no distinction between soul and sensation means only that in this state the soul's attention is reduced to the activity of sensation alone. That is another way of saying that the soul's attention is fully turned to the material world, and, since the passage is about the soul's gaze, this claim, to me, makes good sense. In this case, to say the soul is sensation is not to say that

39 *GS* I.78, Henry–Schwyzer 239, Wakelnig 110, my translation.

40 See D'Ancona Costa, *La discesa dell'anima*, 333.

it is itself physical but to say that it has minimized or is neglecting its other activities, like thinking. This point is brought out further in the next passage, *ThA* IX.68.

> The virtues are not in the rational soul always, but rather sometimes they are existent in it, when it thinks [them]. For when soul casts its vision to Intellect, it then derives from Intellect something of the sorts of virtues, to the extent that it casts its gaze on it. When it sustains its gaze to the Intellect, it acquires the noble virtues from it. If [soul] is heedless, turns to sensation, and occupies itself with it, then Intellect does not pour onto it anything of the virtues, and soul becomes like something of the low, sensory things. So, when it thinks on some of the virtues and desires to acquire them, it looks to Intellect, so that Intellect then emanates virtue on it.[41]

Soul's preoccupation with the sensory world has multiple deleterious effects. Intellect does not pour virtues onto soul, and soul becomes like a sensory thing. Both result from the soul's heedlessness and its turn toward and occupation with sensation. As I argue above, the adaptation is rather exact in these passages: disintegration to sensation entails that soul has spread its attention and activity to body alone, neglecting Intellect and its activity of virtue.

While the portrayal of soul's procession from Intellect is in places positive, there are clear drawbacks to soul's decision to assimilate to sensation. *ThA* VII.42–43 emphasizes that people are unaware of soul and the intellectual world because, "The sensible world dominates us and our souls have become full of its reprehensible appetites (*šahawātuhū*)." The result of this influence is that, "We do not sense that intelligible world and what the soul brings us from it." We can do so only "when we rise above this world and reject its base appetites and do not occupy ourselves with any of its conditions."[42] A return to Intellect begins with the rejection of the *šahawāt*, which, I argued above, stem from the *šahwāniyya* power of soul and are proper to the bodily compound. The first condition of the return to Intellect is the power to reject such appetites and to occupy oneself with Intellect rather than with the sensory. In general, there seems to be a holistic desire that characterizes soul as such, which itself is contrasted with the pseudo-desire of Intellect and the appetitive power of the soul that connects it to the body. The desire accounts for

41 *ThA* IX.68, Henry–Schwyzer 287, Badawī 129–130, my translation.

42 *ThA* VII.42–43, Henry–Schwyzer 249, Badawī 90.

soul's capacity to move between worlds, and it, along with the bodily appetite, must be trained and regulated in order for human beings to attain their ethical end.

## 5 Virtue and the Return

The treatment of virtue in the Arabic Plotinus material has been previously discussed, and I do not wish to go into it in detail here.[43] As I have already shown, soul acquires virtue from sustained attention to Intellect, and from an avoidance of assimilation to sensation. In this section, I will briefly overview the status of virtue with respect to Intellect, and then examine the process of soul's return to Intellect by way of an assimilation to universal soul. Last, I will examine the relation of the return to God, to Intellect, and the conflation of Intellect and the highest principle.

The most explicit discussion of virtue in Intellect is found in *ThA* IX. One finds there a layout of the causal structure behind virtue and the way in which virtue is present at each level of reality. "Now the Intellect has all the virtues in it continually, not sometimes present and sometimes not present, but in it always … because the Intellect does not dispense with looking at the first cause."[44] Further, the virtues in Intellect are perfect and complete, since they are immediately caused by the first principle: "As to the first cause, the virtues are in it in the manner of a cause."[45] The acquisition of the virtues by Intellect from the One occurs along the same causal structure as the soul and Intellect. As long as the lower element maintains its gaze on the source of virtue, it will acquire and maintain the virtues in itself. Nevertheless, the attribution of virtue to Intellect is certainly rather striking, given that Plotinus explicitly claims that the Intellect is *not* virtuous.[46]

Before discussing the individual soul's assimilation to universal soul, it is helpful to consider the nature of assimilation as such, especially as it operates within the return. In *ThA* II, there is an extended discussion of assimilation within the broader discussion of memory. There, in a description of soul's descent, we find an account of what it means for soul to assimilate via imagination. The groundwork is laid as follows.

43 See Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus*, 69–83.

44 *ThA* IX.69, Henry–Schwyzer 287, Badawī 130.

45 *ThA* IX.70–71, Henry–Schwyzer 287, Badawī 130.

46 See *Enn.* I.2(19). See also Adamson on this point, *The Arabic Plotinus*, 73–75.

> For when the soul remembers anything it assimilates itself to that thing which it remembers, because memory is either cogitating or imagining, and imagination has no being that is permanent and abiding in one state, but is in the state of the things it sees.[47]

Properly speaking, imagination is not able to grasp Intellect, since "it is intermediate in position between Intellect and sense," and as a result, it is not able to keep "firmly to one to the exclusion of the other."[48] But soul, when it reaches Intellect, no longer remembers anything from its imagination, such that soul's assimilation to Intellect entails that it is ignorant of the things that are below it, in turn not desiring them.

> [We] say that soul, on leaving this world and entering the upper, intelligible world, remembers nothing of what it knew, particularly when the knowledge it acquired is lowly … [it] is extremely objectionable that the soul should receive impressions of this world when it is in the upper, intelligible world, because that would necessitate its being, in the upper world, the like of what it is in the lower world.[49]

True assimilation to Intellect is complete, and soul has neither the memory nor the impressions of what is below Intellect. In some passages, the return to Intellect is explained by way of an individual soul's assimilation to universal soul. In *ThA* VII.41, the adaptation makes clear that there is part of soul, both of universal soul and individual soul, that remains in the Intellect. Again, one finds soul in need of rejecting its sensible aspect.

> If the soul can reject sense and the transient sensory things and does not hold fast to them, it then controls this body with the slightest effort, with no fatigue or toil, and assimilates (*tašabbahat*) itself to the universal soul and becomes like it in conduct and control, with no difference or variation between them.[50]

This passage is the end of *ThA* VII, such that the explanation does not proceed to a discussion of Intellect, but here it is clear that assimilation to universal

47 *ThA* II.40, Henry–Schwyzer 71, Badawī 35. Cf. Hansberger, "Plotinus Arabus Rides Again," esp. 66 ff.

48 *ThA* II.42, Henry–Schwyzer 71, Badawī 35.

49 *ThA* II.53–54, Henry–Schwyzer 72, Badawī 38.

50 *ThA* VII.50, Henry–Schwyzer 251, Badawī 91. Cf. *Enn.* IV.8(6).8.1–5.

soul coincides with the individual soul's capacity to control the body fully. But what is it about universal soul that allows soul to reach Intellect and the upper, intelligible world? In *GS* 1.69–78, the adaptation explains what happens when particular souls descend from the upper world and universal soul.

> When the souls come to be in these particulars, their stay in them and their separation from the universal soul endure, they lack the world of intellect, do not cast their glance on it and become like a particular, [then] they become weak and find no one to strengthen them, as they remain isolated and alone and the universal soul is not with them. So their thinking and deliberation then multiply and they cast their glance only on the particular things. This happens because of their separation from the whole and [because] they are attached to only one particular thing and master it, give up the universal one and depart from it, and turn to the particular one which they direct with toil and fatigue.[51]

The cause of the particular soul's weakness is its deprivation of the intelligible and its failure to keep its gaze directed toward it. This deprivation leads to soul's weakening—it fails to contemplate the universals with universal soul, and instead focuses on sensory particulars. This passage thus also re-enforces the Plotinian principle that multiplicity entails weakness. Conversely, ascension and assimilation entail contemplation of universals rather than particulars. Had the soul continued to be with universal soul in contemplation of universals, it would have avoided its enfeeblement. In the above passage from *ThA* II, it was left ambiguous whether soul assimilates to Intellect via imagination or some other power. In *GS* 1.74–77, the situation becomes clearer.

> They begin the ascent to their world when they cast away from themselves the filth of the particular body and remember the world of intellect. For they then imagine that world and the beings in it and see them with their noble and elevated glance, because in [the souls] there is something noble, always attached to them, be they above or below, and that is Intellect.[52]

Here one finds that soul does assimilate via imagination, albeit by way of a higher kind of vision. In the lines following, we read that because of soul's sta-

51 *GS* 1.69–71, Henry–Schwyzer 237, Wakelnig 108–111.

52 *GS* 1.74, Henry–Schwyzer 239, Wakelnig 110–111.

tion between the two worlds, it necessarily holds the position of an amphibious creature, *al-ḥayy al-barrī al-baḥrī*. Which world dominates soul and its activities comes about by the direction of soul's gaze. Still, it is not clear from this passage to what extent an individual can assimilate to Intellect. In fact, one could read the remarks as an intimation that an individual must always split their attention given their peculiar situation. But in *ThA* X, one finds a different description of the ethical goal.

> How noble is the upper world and the things in it—and nobler than they is the nobility of wisdom that originated them because it is the greatest nobility of all. None can look on that world save the man whose intelligence has submerged his senses, and who is known only as being Intellect alone. He is the man who has accustomed himself to recognize things by the vision of the Intellect, not by logic and analogy.[53]

The claim is that the one who can look at Intellect—which is a necessary if not sufficient condition for the attainment of virtue—is one who is able to be free from the senses and to grasp things with a higher vision than sensory vision.[54] As a result of this sustained vision, the person is known even as Intellect alone. As established above in my examination of desire, the full realization of Intellect is the ultimate goal, and thus final cause, of the desire of both Intellect and Soul. Although God is frequently identified as the goal of all activity, what God is will turn out to be Intellect, as I will argue in a moment. Entailed within this higher vision is a rejection of logic and analogy. This remark is clarified in the following passage, where he claims that since people think that only the sensible world is true, they are led to believe that science and knowledge are found only by drawing conclusions from premises one has developed and posited. However, "that is not the case in all sciences here, for the knowledge of the first pure manifest principles is obtained without laying down premises, because they are the premises from which conclusions are drawn."[55] The fact that the unchanging principles in Intellect are themselves true premises renders logic and analogy needless there. Such activities are needed only at a lower level.

The clearest picture of ethical success is found at the very end of *DS*, and corroborates and clarifies the account in *ThA* X. Here one finds an analysis of

53 *ThA* X.155, Henry–Schwyzer 389, Badawī 157.

54 We are seeing again, as throughout this section, the dichotomy between the soul's intellection and intellectual vision, and the soul's sensation and sensory vision, further supporting a reading of *al-ḥiss* is *GS* I.78.

55 *ThA* X.156–157, Henry–Schwyzer 389, Badawī 157.

human beings in terms of levels of philosophical progression. The text picks up after a lacuna, and distinguishes three classes. The description of the first class is the shortest, and goes as follows. "… one class, when they see the corporeal things under sensation, suppose that the discrimination of things has been exhausted. Followers of sense-perception call this knowledge 'wisdom'." This class reduces all knowledge to sensation, and it does not occur to them that there may be another (higher) sort of knowledge or wisdom. The second class is described as follows.

> There is also another class of them, raised a little above sense perception, because the intellective soul has stirred them from [the thing that is shunned] to the quest for the better thing, but they have abandoned the search for the noble virtues and have employed base earthly practices, and made the First Thing, beyond which there is nothing else, one of the earthly sensible things. So by means of sense they have wished to reach the knowledge of the First Thing, since they have proved incapable of the knowledge to which Intellect attains.[56]

This class has gone further than the first insofar as the members have been able to go beyond mere sensation, but have still failed in a quest for virtue. Here it is stated explicitly that the members are *unable* to attain true knowledge. In turn, they mistakenly believe the first principle to be something sensible. It is explicit that their failure to attain to Intellect entails their failure to achieve the noble virtues contained in it. The third and final class is described as achieving ethical perfection. I quoted the passage in full above, which describes the individuals as superior, "hav[ing] seen the radiating light by the superior, penetrating, and keen power within them," and having gone beyond all earthly matter, there stop, "contented, and have rejected all things, taking a surpassing delight in that place, which is the true place, suited to the superior ones of mankind."[57] The adaptation lists aspects of the earth itself that supposedly get in the way of perfection: even the vapor of the earth fogs the intellect. This claim highlights the need to separate Intellect completely from sensation, a point emphasized in the following line, which claims that the superior individuals reject all things other than Intellect. Again, the ascent stops explicitly in Intellect, the true place, and does not go beyond it.

---

56 *DS* 231, Henry–Schwyzer 411, Badawī 183.

57 *DS* 233–234, Henry–Schwyzer 411, Badawī 183. See above, pp. 80–81.

Still, it is not clear what explains the adaptation's tendency to state that we return to God even when he has argued that it is philosophically untenable. In his examination of virtue, Adamson has argued that the adaptor undertook such a change in order to show Greek ethics to be congruent with his own theological context.[58] Adamson raises two points in support of this thesis: first, the fact that the adaptor makes God the source and principle of virtue, and second, the willingness to set Empedocles as the mouthpiece for a doctrine of forgiveness. I am rather convinced by his argument, and I want to add one small suggestion in favor of reading the adaptor's ethics as largely influenced by his Islamic context. My suggestion concerns the way in which the adaptor discusses the return, specifically the way in which he explains the return to the One. It is common for the adaptation to describe the return using the locative construction, and there are four reasons this construction has Quranic and extra-textual resonance.[59] First, the nomen loci is used throughout the Quran to highlight God as the place to which one must return.[60] Second, this notion is decidedly non-Plotinian and in turn not present in the source text, given that the One would never be said to be in a place. Third, the text uses this construction in addition to and as a restatement of a straightforward claim that we return to God. Last, this notion of returning to God is inharmonious with the otherwise consistent claims that one's return ends with Intellect, so that there must be another motivation for the addition of this construction. I want to offer here two passages for this interpretation. The first is *ThA* IX.74, which explains the situation in which we are "supported and sustained by the first agent."

> To him to do we cling, towards him is our desire, to him do we incline and to him do we return: though we are remote and distant from him, our destination and the place of our returning (*marjiʿunā*) is in him, just as the destination of the radii of the circle is in the center, though they be remote and distant.[61]

This example is especially salient, since the original Greek explicitly says that the One is *not* in a place, and the adaptation includes this claim: "The virtues

58 Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus*, 74–75.

59 I do not see this point entailing that the text was adapted by a Muslim, as there are several reasons one might include a number of religious references within a text.

60 See for example 2:156; 5:48; 6:60, 164; 11:4; 29:57. See also Zimmermann's discussion of this point in Zimmermann, *Origins*, 141–143.

61 *ThA* IX.74, Henry–Schwyzer 287, Badawī 131.

well forth from it without its dividing or moving or reposing in any place."[62] The second passage is *ThA* X.33, where he says, "All things are fixed in Intellect and Intellect is fixed in the first cause, and the first cause is the beginning and end of all things. From it do they originate and to it is their returning (*marjiʿuhā*), as we have often said."[63] Both passages utilize the nomen loci in addition to a straightforward articulation of the return. I think this usage is one more indication of the adaptor's readiness to accommodate his ethics to his theological context. This impetus may go some way in explaining this disconnect between the philosophical conclusion that our return stops in Intellect, and the apparently theological one that the return is always to the One itself. First, it is clear that the theory is decidedly rationalist, placing the aim of ethical progress in unification with the Intellect. Second, the small glimpse of political commentary one finds toward the end of *DS* follows this rationalist arc, ranking human beings according to their capacity to be aware of and assimilate to Intellect.

I will end the examination of desire in the Arabic Plotinus here, but not without a few concluding remarks, for this adaptation of Plotinus's philosophy contains several notable differences. The inherent model of desire in the soul is carried over into the adaptation, although desire's role as a whole is severely truncated. While desire remains integral to the being of soul, its inception is as a form, and the manifestation of desire in the soul remains decidedly rational since the object of soul's desire is Intellect. This inherent model helped to set the precedent for one way of understanding desire and its function for the ensuing philosophical tradition. On this model, desire is foundational to human subjects, that is, to rational souls, and is in turn permanent. However, the permanence of desire sits a bit uncomfortably with the claims that souls stop and are content once they reach Intellect. In fact, the hesitation to attribute desire to Intellect or to intellection as an activity is, as I will discuss in the following chapter, not unusual. Even in more straightforwardly Aristotelian frameworks, desire within intellection is not obvious, especially because Aristotle's psychological account of desire occurred in a discussion of locomotion. We will see multiple accounts that develop as responses to this ambiguity about desire in intellection throughout the rest of this study, including Avicenna's remarks on the *ThA*, to which we now turn.

62 See *Enn.* V.1(10).11.8–9: "Since he does not abide in a place (καὶ οὐκ ἐν τοπῷ μένοντος)." *ThA* IX.71, Henry–Schwyzer 287, Badawī 130.

63 *ThA* X.33, Henry–Schwyzer 297, Badawī 139.

## 6 Avicenna on the *Theology of Aristotle*

The premier Aristotelian philosopher of the age, Avicenna's remarks in his commentary on the *ThA* are insightful, both because his thought is heavily influential on Ibn Ṭufayl, and because his commentary gives us an impression of the way in which a philosopher might approach this text. This last point is especially important given both the tortured transmission of the *Plotiniana Arabica* and the *ThA* and that, as Avicenna himself remarks, the authorship of the *ThA* was already in question in the 5th/11th century.[64] Such a commentary on the *ThA* is unparalleled, but has received surprisingly little scholarly attention, especially on the philosophical concepts it contains. In Avicenna's commentary, which is most likely a student's notation of Avicenna's remarks on the *ThA*, there are four concepts that I would like to examine.[65] These concepts are desire, assimilation, true vision, and power. First and primarily, I will examine the concept of desire. I divide the remarks on this desire also into four categories: the desire of all things for the First Principle, appetite, the ultimate object of desire, and the desire of the soul (which includes soul's relation to desire and the role this desire plays in the soul's perfection). Since Avicenna spends the most time discussing this final category, I will start there.

Avicenna discusses soul's desire as desire for the sensible world and as desire that leads to soul's perfection.[66] These two ways of discussing desire are to some extent a reflection of the Plotinian upwards-facing and downward-facing motion. But, as well will see, Avicenna is highly critical of the *ThA* on precisely this point. Rather, these two desiderative directions are united insofar as soul desires things universally or particularly, and soul's capacity to desire things universally moves it toward its own ultimate perfection, acting in place of a properly upwards-facing desire. All of the passages on these points occur in what Badawī has identified as Avicenna's discussion of the very first lines of *ThA* 1, which depict soul's generation and separation from Intellect, which I examined above. First, in his explanation of the soul's descent from Intellect, Avicenna argues that the point of the passage is to show that soul is not perfect from the beginning of its existence, but that it must attain perfection over

64 See Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 145.

65 On the nature and transmission of the text, see Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 144–155.

66 On Avicenna's appraisal of the conception of soul found in the *ThA*, see Adamson, "Correcting Plotinus," 59–75.

the course of time. The direction of perfection is here opposite to the normal Plotinian one, and this Aristotelianizing is in fact supported by a claim about inherent desire. Avicenna says, "Rather, it is a substance perfected through what comes to it through a certain kind of acquisition and search, and … there must be an innate desire (*šawq ġarīzī*) for seeking this perfection," repeating an Aristotelian truism that as stated demands an inherent desire in soul.[67] The desire soul has that causes it to seek perfection is missing in pure intellectual substance, i.e. Intellect itself.[68] As for this substance, Avicenna explains, "There is no rank it seeks nor perfection it pursues, nor does it desire (*lā yaštāqu*) anything other than what is occurring to it."[69] We find this differentiation again in the following passage, where Avicenna continues this explanation of soul's desire in terms of need, saying that the soul acquires a desire (*šawq*) because "its search for what it desires is of a kind other than that of intellect."[70] Whatever Intellect's search is, it does not include desire, for Intellect is not in need of perfection. Avicenna does not explain whether soul is somehow in need *before* it acquires desire for separation and departs Intellect, since on this account the soul seems to need something from the sensible world that it does not already have. This lack of clarity is not ameliorated in Avicenna's remark on the claim from *ThA* 1.5, that "the soul is only an intellect formed by the form of desire," which he explains in the following way.

> That is, the soul is an intellectual thing separated from matter in its essence, having taken on a form (*ṣūra*) of desire for the sensible world. This is because the form that has come to it is soul—and this is because it [the soul] joins with the sensible world. It is only soul because it is the perfection of a natural living body.[71]

Here we find Avicenna clarifying two points about the nature of soul: first, that it is intellectual and therefore separated from matter essentially, but also—quite against what one reads in the *ThA* itself—that soul is the perfection of a natural living body.[72] The latter point is a clear instance of the further Aris-

67 Badawī, *Arisṭu ʿinda al-ʿArab*, 37; Adamson, "The Arabic Plotinus," 324.

68 This formulation highlights the extent to which Intellect, by definition, cannot be desiring in the account of *ThA*.

69 Badawī, *Arisṭu ʿinda al-ʿArab*, 38; Adamson, "The Arabic Plotinus," 324, slightly modified.

70 Badawī, *Arisṭu ʿinda al-ʿArab*, 38–39; Adamson, "The Arabic Plotinus," 325.

71 Badawī, *Arisṭu ʿinda al-ʿArab*, 39–40; Adamson, "The Arabic Plotinus," 326.

72 On this tension in the text on this point in particular, see Adamson, "Aristotelianism and the Soul," 217, itself inspired by Zimmermann, "The Origins of the so-called *Theology of Aristotle*," 117.

totelianization of Plotinus's thought. Unfortunately, he, like his source text, does not enumerate on what it means for soul to have a form of desire.

As mentioned above, Avicenna defines the desire by which the soul itself is perfected in two ways: as universal or as particular. He takes this explanation from *ThA* 1.5–6, where one reads that soul's desire may be universal or particular, and explains this desire within an account of perfection. He says, "That by which the soul, by desiring it (*tatašawwaqu*), is perfected, may be a universal object (*amran*), or it may be a particular object." The universal objects are in the intellectual world separate from matter, while on the contrary, "if this desire (*al-šawq*) is for the particular things that are forms in matter, imitating the universal forms, the soul 'adorns them and augments them in purity and beauty'."[73] It is clear that Avicenna thinks that universal desire is better than particular desire, the latter seeming mostly, on his account, to benefit the particular forms concerned, not the soul. The last passage on desire in soul is one of the more famous passages from this text, insofar as Avicenna claims that the text of *ThA* must be corrupted, since he rejects that the soul might "see" something within Intellect before being perfect. The idea in the passage from the *ThA* is that soul remembers something of what it saw before it descended from its perfect state in Intellect to its lesser state in soul. Since Avicenna rejects the descent of the soul—and therefore that soul would have been somehow perfect already before becoming imperfect, he argues:

> If the soul has seen the intellectual world, then it has become perfect, because the seeing of the thing is the reception of form. But [the text] means the seeing of the things that are in the intellect, that is, it desires (*yaštāqu*) to see them in the intellect. In general, the desire is general, not specific, like he who desires sexual intercourse but has not known it nor experienced its pleasure, and like the irrational animals, since they desire the general and not the specific, except when it is attained.[74]

Since Avicenna conceives of intellection as the reception of form—not as viewing the intelligibles within Intellect—he rejects the claim that soul has already somehow seen the intelligibles. As an explanation, he has recourse to the kind of desire that one has in a general and undetailed way, claiming that this desire is the kind meant here (this desire must be kept distinct from

73 Badawī, *Arisṭu ʿinda al-ʿArab*, 40; Adamson, "The Arabic Plotinus," 326. See also, Adamson, "Non-Discursive Thought," 99–100.

74 Badawī, *Arisṭu ʿinda al-ʿArab*, 39; Adamson, "The Arabic Plotinus," 325.

the universal desire just discussed). His distinction between general and specific desire seems to be drawn along the lines of inherent and non-inherent desire I am using in this study. The human being desires sexual intercourse in general (and one might think, inherently), but one does not have a specific desire, namely, one has no specific instance in which this desire connects to a discrete object and instance of pleasure. The same division thus works for animals as well, insofar as one might think that the lion, at least, does not care so much *what* she eats, she just wants food, whether it be a gazelle or a zebra.

Thus, in summary, Avicenna's remarks on the desire of soul and in soul's instantiation in the sensible world and ensuing perfection follow the adaptation in claiming that Intellect has no desire. Further, Avicenna explains that soul needs to be perfected, and that this perfection requires and happens through both universal and particular desire. It is also worth highlighting that Avicenna follows the adaptation and denotes soul's desire always with variations of *š-w-q*, which, as will become clear throughout this book, was the term of choice for denoting desire in general and for translating desire in many cases. In only one place Avicenna discusses the desire of *heavenly* souls, when he seems to be commenting upon the discussion in the *ThA* of soul's assimilation to whatever it sees. Avicenna delineates the movement of the heavenly souls by claiming that, "The heavenly souls, insofar as they are embodied and insofar as they are moving—not in the way in which the desired (*al-muštāq*) and the beloved (*al-maʿšūq*) move, but rather in the way that that which seeks movement moves—perceive …"[75] He does not specify the object of desire and love, but we can reasonably expect him to have the First Cause in mind.[76] He also does not explicitly say that the heavenly souls desire and love, but their motion, contrasted with the object of desire and love, clearly seems to be due to the movement of desire and love for that object. Thus, he highlights an as-yet unstated theme in the text, the Aristotelian desire for God.

This passage has already introduced the next point on which Avicenna discusses desire, namely, by remarking on an *object* of desire. In addition to this previous instance, we read, in explanation of the attainment of the highest goal, that one ought "attain the beloved (*ʿašīq*), which is beloved in itself, not inasmuch as it is merely subject to awareness and intellection, but insofar as it is beloved in its substance."[77] Here the terminology markedly changes, and we find the same term being used in the final reference to the object of desire,

75 Badawī, *Arisṭu ʿinda al-ʿArab*, 51; Adamson, "The Arabic Plotinus," 336.

76 See Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of* The Healing, 323.

77 Badawī, *Arisṭu ʿinda al-ʿArab*, 44; Adamson, "The Arabic Plotinus," 330.

when Avicenna explains a reference to Heraclitus' claim that one is rewarded if one achieves the highest state. Avicenna explains: "In this passage, [it is] the payment [for] the effort undertaken by the soul in abandoning its first object of desire (*ʿašīquhā al-awwal*), which is the body, [and] awakening to its true object of desire (*li-l-ʿašīq al-ḥaqīqī*)."[78] Here we learn that Avicenna accounts for various sorts of objects of desire, the true object of desire being what is beloved in itself and in its own substance, as we read in the prior passage. Avicenna does not elaborate here on what makes something lovable, but we have already seen so far in this investigation that this description is one of many ways of referring to the First Cause or the One, that which is beloved as the ensurer of all being. This description will recur in the following chapter in the examination of al-Fārābī.

The final two ways in which Avicenna mentions desire are extremely brief. First, we have his two quick references to appetite or carnal desire, *šahwa*. In one instance, Avicenna explains in what way a soul might become dirtied by coming into the body, claiming that, "When the soul becomes bodily, and there is established in it a condition of obedience to the bodily things, such as appetite (*al-šahwa*) … then the soul … is turned away from the higher world."[79] The other reference to the carnal desire that comes from the body is less moral in tone, and is a mere description of the types of powers that are responsible for the condition of being in the body: "[The soul] needs to have, after the sensible faculties, a faculty that repels injury,—the irascible and timorous [faculties]—and a faculty that attracts the beneficial and the necessary—the desiring (*šahwāniyya*) and nutritive [faculties]."[80]

Finally, Avicenna discusses desire through what is now a common refrain, although it is a little strange to hear it from Avicenna. In his remarks on the claim that all things come from and return to the First Agent, Avicenna claims that all things desire it.

> He says that, since the Principle of all things is the Everlasting through His essence and the Truth through His essence, all things long (*nāziʿa*) for Him, either by free will (*irāda*), by wish (*ḍarb*), by a sort of inspiration, or because of [an inclination] of natures towards love (*ḥubb*) of the abiding,

78 Badawī, *Arisṭu ʿinda al-ʿArab*, 45; Adamson, "The Arabic Plotinus," 331. For more discussion of *ʿišq* by Avicenna, see his own *Risāla fī l-ʿišq*, the Arabic of which may be found in *Traités mystiques*, Ar. 1–27, and an English translation in Fackenheim, "A Treatise on Love by Avicenna."

79 Badawī, *Arisṭu ʿinda al-ʿArab*, 42; Adamson, "The Arabic Plotinus," 328.

80 Badawī, *Arisṭu ʿinda al-ʿArab*, 54–55; Adamson, "The Arabic Plotinus," 340.

> which is sought individually or considered, so that they abide through it in species and are moved by this.[81]

Both the claim that all things long for the First Cause and the terminology for desire, *nāziʿa*, are unique in the commentary, although Avicenna explores this idea at length in his *Treatise on Love* (*Risāla fī l-ʿišq*). The idea is not so far from the originally Plotinian one that I argued for in the first chapter: that the desire basic to all things expresses itself in various ways depending upon the nature and capacity of the desiring individual. Further, Avicenna implicitly references here to the fact that, with the exception of human animals, the preservation of animals is spoken of on the level of the species, an integral aspect of Avicenna's account of providence.

There are then these four ways in which Avicenna discusses desire: the desire of the soul, specifying the object of desire, indicating appetite, and finally to denote the longing all things have, in some capacity, for the First Cause. The first category is certainly the one to which Avicenna returns the most, and his discussion of soul's desire is the most philosophically rich. In his discussion of soul's desire, we found that desire was integral to the perfection of the soul, in fact, it is a sign that some instance of intellectual substance is a soul in the first place. Further, soul's desire may be directed at different sorts of objects, and is to some extent perfected depending on the objects that it desires. The soul must work on changing the objects of its utmost desire, for it does indeed have a true object of desire, which is desired in itself and in its own substance.

There are three other relevant topics on which Avicenna briefly remarks that I would like to highlight: assimilation, true vision, and power for perfection. In his discussion of the connection between soul's recollection and its assimilation to that which it remembers, Avicenna enumerates three different kinds of imitation, *tašabbuh*, a term that will play a crucial role in Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān*.

> For the soul, then, there are three imitations (*tašabbuhāt*): imitation of intellect, in which [it is] as remembering (*ḏākir*) the intellectual concepts, imitation of the heavenly bodies, and imitation of the earthly bodies. And the attainment of each imitation after its cessation is a certain remembering, and its permanence is a certain remembrance and preservation.[82]

81 Badawī, *Arisṭu ʿinda al-ʾArab*, 73; Adamson, "The Arabic Plotinus," 358.

82 Badawī, *Arisṭu ʿinda al-ʾArab*, 51; Adamson, "The Arabic Plotinus," 337, altered.

This concise presentation ends his explanation that through the soul's different types of apprehension or awareness, *idrāk*, such as sensation or an intellectual awareness, the soul imitates the objects of its awareness, which in turn lead to soul's becoming like it. As I will show in the following chapter, the notion of awareness was brought out more explicitly and to some extent emphasized in the Arabic translations of the *DA*, as a result of which awareness became essential in later accounts of desire. Badawī rightly, I think, identifies the relevant passage of the *ThA* as *ThA* II.40, which claims

> For when the soul remembers anything it assimilates (*tašabbahat*) herself to that thing which she remembers, because memory is either cogitating or imagining, and imagination has no being that is permanent and abiding in one state, but it in the state of things it sees, be they earthly or heavenly, because according to what earthly or heavenly thing it sees, correspondingly does it change and become like it.[83]

This passage is a (fairly) direct translation from the Greek passage, wherein Plotinus discusses this very point in a broader discussion of the relation between individual souls and the world soul, and individual soul's possible assimilation to the latter in its journey toward the Good. In the adaptation, the discussion also regards the soul's assent back to Intellect after its initial descent, although in the adaptation the various stopping points are more definitely highlighted, namely, that in its descent the soul can stop either at the heavenly bodies or descend all the way to earthly bodies. This threefold distinction—intellect, heavenly bodies, and earthly bodies—is further highlighted in the soul's return to Intellect. Another place in the commentary that Avicenna mentions imitation is in a gloss on the Quranic phrase I highlighted above: "And everything returns to it, that is, seeks the perfection (*al-istikmāl*) of its species, and is perfected through imitation (*bi-l-tašabbuh*) of it."[84] Here it is further specified that things imitate the Creator (*al-mubdiʿ*), which Avicenna mentions in the previous lines, and that this imitation makes things perfect.[85]

It is worth lingering on this notion of becoming perfect, for Avicenna discusses it again in combination with consideration of the power soul has for apprehending, *idrāk*, the things in intellect. In these remarks, Avicenna is concerned with whether the power, *quwwa*, that the soul uses to apprehend the intelligibles is essential to the soul. Specifically, he needs to explain on what

83 *ThA* II.40, Henry–Schwyzer 71, Badawī 35. Cf. *Enn.* IV.4(28).3.

84 Badawī, *Arisṭu ʿinda al-ʿArab*, 64; Adamson, "The Arabic Plotinus," 349.

85 It also makes things simpler. See Adamson, "Non-Discursive," 95.

grounds the soul can apprehend intelligibles at all, and in what way the power to do so is affected by soul's connection to the body. He claims that "the intelligibles are apprehended only through an inborn power belonging to psychic substance, to the exclusion of the external organs."[86] This power is perfected through what the soul experiences while in the body, and it is this perfection that is the reason soul associates with bodies in the first place.

> The power is not perfected owing to its act, because it needs an increase in itself and a clarification and interpreter for itself. [The soul] is only perfected from the acts through which it attains this clarification and complete inclination, so that it comes to perform an operation which perfects the power, and which, through the observation of sensible things, makes it ready for reception of an emanation from above, through which its power is fulfilled … [Soul's] association with the bodies is in order to perfect that power.[87]

The notion of power was also important in the previous chapter, but we see immediately that Avicenna has a very different idea about the way soul's power for its highest goal is operative while soul is in body. This power must be perfected once it is in body, rather than actualize itself back to a higher, earlier state of perfection. The relation of the power to perfection is also something that I discussed at length in the previous chapter, although there the power was a desire that was built into substance itself and drove the soul's *return* upward, not only soul's intellectual perfection of itself. According to Avicenna's interpretation, the capacity for intellection by which soul is perfected requires the bodily state for soul ever to be perfected in the first place, and in the Plotinian original and in the Arabic adaptation the power soul has for knowing the intelligibles is perfected, that is, complete or operational, in it always, even before its association with body.[88]

The last idea I would like to examine is Avicenna's discussion of witnessing or true vision, *al-mušāhada al-ḥaqqa*, the most extensive passage on which occurs in a remark on *ThA* I.25. Avicenna aims to explain the claim that "thought screens that light and splendor from me." Here, he makes what is now a well-known distinction between apprehension, *idrāk*, and true vision, *mušāhada ḥaqqa*. The passage in question is the following.

---

86 Badawī, *Arisṭu ʿinda al-ʿArab*, 71; Adamson, "The Arabic Plotinus," 356, altered.

87 Badawī, *Arisṭu ʿinda al-ʿArab*, 71; Adamson, "The Arabic Plotinus," 356.

88 The idea is Plotinian, but it is worth highlighting that the passage on which Avicenna here comments, *ThA* VIII.61–63, is an extended passage with no immediate Greek parallel.

> But apprehension is one thing, and true vision is another. True vision follows apprehension, when the intention is turned towards the True One (*al-wāḥid al-ḥaqq*), and is disjoined from all that preoccupies it and detains it from seeing it. Here [i.e. in true vision] there is, together with apprehension, a cognizance of the object of apprehension, inasmuch as the object of apprehension is suitable and delightful. I say that you are not informed of this matter except by experience, and it is not among the things known by reason. For in the case of every one of the sensible things [i.e. acts of sensation], although reason has a greater part of apprehension, the proper states are known through experience. Just as taste does not touch reason, so likewise with the utmost degree of sensible pleasure. But reason has a greater part of apprehension as vague affirmation, without detail, and likewise [in the case of] the intellectual pleasures and the utmost degree of states of vision of higher beauty. Reason only gives you that which is the most excellent splendor. As for its proper characteristic (*ḫāṣṣiyya*), you are not informed [of it] except by direct contact (*mubāšara*), and not everyone has this available to them.[89]

In addition to the initial distinction between apprehension and true vision, one might further wonder about the role of experience that seems, at least partially, to distinguish the two intellectual states primarily at issue. Both Adamson and Gutas have discussed this passage, in particular whether it constitutes any kind of mysticism.[90] Gutas is interested in explaining exactly this distinction, and he does so by connecting these two states to the division between particulars and universals. In the case in question, intellect is the subject of both apprehension and of true vision, and the difference is that the apprehension is of universals "in their universal aspect," while true vision is of universals "in their particular aspect," this particular aspect being the universal's *ḫāṣṣiyya* to which Avicenna refers at the end of the passage.[91] Gutas highlights the role of experience in this distinction, saying, "What is peculiar to the experiential aspect of the perception of both particulars and universals is that they are accompanied by *affective* or *emotive* states, or emotions."[92] The distinction Avicenna draws here will reappear later in Ibn Ṭufayl's discussion, likely not from this text in par-

89 Badawī, *Arisṭu ʿinda al-ʿArab*, 44; Adamson, "The Arabic Plotinus," 330–331.

90 Although Adamson examines this passage in a broader consideration of non-discursive thinking in Avicenna. See Adamson, "Non-Discursive Thought," 87–111. See also Gutas, "Intellect Without Limits," 351–372.

91 Gutas, "Intellect Without Limits," 368.

92 Gutas, 369.

ticular, but from other works of Avicenna and especially from the appropriation of Avicenna's theory by al-Ġazālī, who utilizes to some extent this conception of *mušāhada*. The difference between the two thinkers' conceptions will lie in their positions about the logical structure of this knowledge, and this is the final point of Gutas's article I would like to highlight. He argues that in the case of true vision, the intellect does not need to work through the process of finding middle terms of syllogisms in order to conceive universals. Rather, the middle term is present in a way unexpressed, because the intellect is already familiar with the universal that it now perceives in the aspect of particularity. Speaking on a similar passage from another text, Gutas explains concisely: "The intellect does not need the middle terms *in order to have* its direct vision, although these middle terms are present as a matter of fact insofar as the knowledge that is gained is intellective knowledge which cannot but have a logical structure."[93] This precise point in particular is the most basic ground on which Gutas can claim there is no mystical knowledge in Avicenna at all (and it is this logical structure of reality that al-Ġazālī rejects in his appropriation of Avicennan epistemology). Recall that above we saw that in the *ThA* logic is rejected as the ultimate means by which one can attain the truth, for we read of the virtuous person that, "He is the man who has accustomed himself to recognize things by the vision of the Intellect, not by logic and analogy."[94] This rejection of logic is directly Plotinian, and we find it again in Ibn Ṭufayl's remarks on and depiction of the path to and substance of human perfection.

In his commentary on the *ThA*, Avicenna highlighted several themes that I have already discussed in the Greek and Arabic Plotinus: the role of desire, the role of imitation and assimilation, the centrality of a specific power for reaching one's ultimate aim, and last the distinction between two different kinds of apprehension of the ultimate object. On this last point, Avicenna's remarks aim to clarify a non-rational aspect of the description of the ultimate act of apprehension, the experiential aspect of true vision, the light and splendor that he highlights from the adaptation. But clearly Avicenna's explanation of this passage does not entail that anything occurs outside of intellection of universals by way of now familiar syllogisms. As in the Arabic adaptation, in Avicenna's remarks, too, the ultimate object that one can witness is the intellect, although Avicenna at least once refers to the True One. Thus, there are several points in this commentary at which Avicenna finds salient the issues with which this study is concerned. It is difficult, if not impossible, to say with certainty to

93 Gutas, 371. The text in question is Avicenna's *al-Mubāḥaṯāt*. On the dating and nature of this text, see Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 159–160.

94 ThA X.155, Henry–Schwyzer 389, Badawī 157.

what extent Avicenna's philosophical conclusions were influenced by the *ThA*, although we already saw that at least on the central question of soul, Avicenna clearly rejects the position found in the *ThA*. We saw some further alterations of *ThA* based on Avicenna's primary Greek interlocutor, Aristotle. Avicenna's mature works on the soul were already written at the composition of the commentary on the *ThA*, and the Aristotelian foundation of his thought already set.

Although Andalusī thinkers likely had access to the *ThA*, there were more immediate points of influence, as Ibn Bāǧǧa and Ibn Ṭufayl were each influenced by different thinkers who were in some way inspired by Neoplatonism: al-Fārābī and Avicenna. In al-Andalus in particular, the influence of Neoplatonism ran deep, and in the previous chapter I raised the work of Ibn Gabirol as one whose thought was starkly similar to Plotinus's. However, with this influence came controversy, which I will discuss at the beginning of chapter four. To what extent and in what way Ibn Bāǧǧa and Ibn Ṭufayl were committed to Neoplatonic thought will also be discussed in what follows, but it is important to note that from here on out, Plotinian and Aristotelian conceptions of desire were combined, not only since they were all considered to be by Aristotle, but because by the time of Avicenna, the distinct ideas found in these Greek thinkers had already been integrated into the original and systematic thought of philosophers in the Islamic world. Moving forward, we will examine several appraisals of desire and approaches to the truth, and see two approaches to navigating the relation of rational thinking and conative operation that had far reaching consequences. But first, let us turn to look at Aristotle's actual account of desire and the ways it was transmitted into Arabic, alongside that of his foremost proponent, al-Fārābī.

CHAPTER 3

# Aristotle and al-Fārābī on Desire

The contours of this study have been fundamentally formed by Aristotle. I highlighted in the Introduction the ambiguity in Aristotle's presentation of desire and reason, as well as the various approaches to presenting a consistent account of desire's generation with respect to its object. We saw in the previous two chapters the way in which a Plotinian interpretation of some of Aristotle's claims about human desire provided a profoundly different account of the way in which desires functions in the world and in the human being. Rather than desire working in service of reason, Plotinus locates desire within an emanative schema as the motor responsible for the basic operation of substances of all kinds. In doing so, he introduced a radical inherent model of desire that forms an alternative to the non-inherent model that is easily attributed to Aristotle. Thus far, we have yet to examine Aristotle's own theory in any detail, although we have looked at the *ThA* falsely attributed to him. So, looking forward to Ibn Bāǧǧa but before turning to al-Andalus, it would serve us to consider Aristotle's own discussions of desire, as well as one of his earliest adherents in the Islamic world, Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī. As we will see, Aristotle and al-Fārābī were the two most influential of Ibn Bāǧǧa's immediate philosophical sources, and Ibn Ṭufayl was indebted to both as well. Thus, in this chapter, I will examine the translations of Aristotle's discussion of desire most influential on al-Fārābī and Ibn Bāǧǧa. I will then lay out al-Fārābī's own theory of desire, before turning to his own assessment of desire within Aristotle's thought. Last, I will consider the relations of these theories to the two models of desire, arguing that Aristotle's and al-Fārābī's accounts of desire are easily understood along a non-inherent model, although al-Fārābī's discussion of the inherent desire of the celestial intellects—and of God—highlight the unique case the latter presents.

## 1 Aristotle on Desire

Our understanding of desire according to Aristotle—as it might have been understood by our authors—depends first on the availability of his texts within the Islamic world and second on the survival of those texts up to the present day. As I highlighted in the Introduction, Aristotle's accounts of motivation and practical action have been extensively addressed in contemporary scholarship,

and general consideration of accounts of desire and action in Aristotle include at least *DA*, *MA*, and the *EN*.[1] But, as far as we know, *MA* was never translated into Arabic (although our thinkers knew that such a text existed due to the availability of Ptolemy's list of Aristotle's works). Thus, we are left with the *DA* and the *EN*. Given the extent to which we are interested in the structure of desire with respect to the soul, our primary text concerning desire and the soul will be the *DA*. Aristotle's remarks on desire and action throughout the *EN* are also pertinent, although in their Arabic translation these remarks are of very limited use to this investigation.

Consideration of the influence of the *EN* requires some general comments before examining the text itself as it survives in Arabic. A curious aspect of the Arabic *EN* is the additional, so-called "Seventh Book," with the result that the *EN* was understood to contain *eleven* books, not the canonical ten. This additional book is a discussion of the character virtues and vices found in Books III–V, and appears to be a translation of another Greek text written after Aristotle.[2] Outside of this addition, the text has not come down to us in its entirety, and in its current form nearly all of Book VI is missing. Although the *EN* does not provide an extended treatment of desire, its translation is informative at least insofar as we find that here, as in the Arabic Plotinus materials, diverse Greek terminology is translated inconsistently. Multiple Greek words are translated by variations of the Arabic root *š-w-q*, while variations of another root, *š-h-w*, translate additional *and the same* Greek words. For example, the familiar first line of the text, that all things desire, ἐφίεται, the good, reads "the good is that which all things *yatašawwaqu*."[3] By contrast, in Aristotle's discussion of pleasure as the completion of activities in Book X, we read in the Greek that it is reasonable that people desire, ἐφίενται, pleasure, while in translation, we read *yaštahūna*.[4] By and large, *š-h-w* occurs much more frequently in the text, as Ullmann has extensively documented.[5] We also find use of *q-ṣ-d* in combination with desiring terms, and below we will see al-Fārābī use this same vocabulary in his discussion of Aristotle on human endeavor. For example, consider again Book I. There, in I.4 and I.6, we find at 1095a16 and 1097a5 in translation of ἐφίεσθαι and

1 For extended discussions of desire as it relates to appetite, on which this book does not focus, see Lorenz, *The Brute Within*; and for an extended discussion of Aristotle on action and the apparent good, see Moss, *Aristotle on the Apparent Good*.

2 Aristotle, *The Arabic Version of the* Nicomachean Ethics, 55–58.

3 Aristotle, 113.

4 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1175a16–17; in *The Arabic Version of the* Nicomachean Ethics, 545.

5 Ullmann, *Die Nikomachische* Ethik, 192–194.

ἐφιέμεναι, *yatašawwaqu* and *yaqṣidu*, and *taštāqu* and *taqṣidu*, respectively, in emphasis of two meanings of the middle voice of ἐφίημι.[6] Owing to this aspect of the translation, any precise discussion of desire in the *EN* will have been changed in transmission. Compounded with the incompleteness of the text as it now stands, we face serious limitations in tracking the influence of the *EN* on the notion of desire. Indeed, even the I.13 discussion on the two-tiered division of the soul and the two types of desire found therein is lacunate in the surviving manuscript. The other relevant aspects of the *EN* one might consider are the discussion of wish and deliberation in III.4 and perhaps discussion of apparent goods in Book VII. By and large, these aspects do not surface clearly in the texts we examine here, as opposed to the important role granted to contemplation. Another complication is that *hawan*, the translation of βούλησις in the *EN*, is not taken up within philosophical vocabulary for desire (as is already becoming clear). Further, philosophical accounts of intention intersected with the theological debates around the notion of will, *irāda*, deeply complicating the influence of Aristotle's discussion of wish. In addition to these obstacles, the fact that this study focuses on desire in *theoretical* reasoning rather than action requires us to postpone any major conclusions on the influence of the *EN* on the topic of desire.

For these reasons, when we want to understand the Aristotelian account of desire available to our authors, we must consider primarily the *DA*. This is not to say that the *EN* was inconsequential. Our current resources certainly do not reflect the resources available to our thinkers, and the poor survival of the *EN*—and, to some extent, even texts about the *EN*—does not entail that this text was unimportant or unknown. It means only that we are, to some extent, veiled from appreciating its influence in exactitude, though its impact is clear. As discussed below and in the following chapters, the *EN* was indeed well known in al-Andalus, and in fact, our three remaining thinkers, al-Fārābī, Ibn Bāǧǧa, and Ibn Ṭufayl, all knew and to various degrees argued about the *EN*. Al-Fārābī, though not Andalusī, was extremely influential in al-Andalus, and his claims in his lost commentary on the *EN* was a point of debate for Ibn Bāǧǧa and Ibn Ṭufayl—and all of this is to say nothing of Averroes's own commentary on the *EN*.[7] Thus, I want to emphasize that even though in the present instance the topic requires that we focus on the *DA*, the influence of the *EN* remains nonetheless.

6 Aristotle, *The Arabic Version of the* Nicomachean Ethics, 119 and 129, respectively.

7 On Averroes's paraphrase, see Harvey and Woerther, "Averroes' *Middle Commentary*," 254–287; and Woerther, "Averroes' Goals," 218–236. For an overview of the intellectual provenance of the *EN* in the formative period, see Hayes, "The Arabic Reception."

Before looking into the *DA* as it was translated into Arabic, I want to offer a brief overview of the structure of desire in the soul as it is presented in the Greek text. In *DA* III.9, Aristotle introduces a discussion of motion: "Since the soul of animals has been defined in respect of two capacities (δυνάμεις), first the faculty of judgement, which is the work of thought and perception, and further by its initiating locomotion (καὶ ἔτι τῷ κινεῖν τὴν κατὰ τόπον κίνησιν), it is necessary to make an inquiry into the initiation of motion."[8] Although Aristotle will throughout refer to motion, κίνησις, alone, this introduction makes it clear that when he discusses motion, he here means motion with respect to place, τὴν κατὰ τόπον κίνησιν.[9] This analysis is especially relevant to the delineation of the parts and powers of soul, of which desire, ὄρεξις, is one power. On this power, Aristotle says, that "[ὄρεξις] would seem to differ from them all in account and in its potentiality. And it is definitely absurd to break this up, because wish (βούλησις) comes to be in the rational faculty, while appetite (ἐπιθυμία) and spirit (θυμός) come to be in the irrational part, and if the soul is threefold, there will be desire in each part" (432b3–7). Originally, Aristotle claims that locomotion requires both imagination and desire (432b15–16), although it becomes clear that ultimately the animal needs a general critical or cognitive power. For desire, most fundamentally, needs an *object* of desire that is somehow evaluated as good (433a27–29), after which the desiring power initiates motion (433a21). Aristotle claims that this object is either thought or imagined (τῷ νοηθῆναι ἢ φαντασθῆναι, 433b12), with imagination itself being broken up into imagination that is rational or sensible (λογιστικὴ ἢ αἰσθητική, 433b29). This account from the *DA* is a bit different from what we read in *MA* 700b17–21, where Aristotle divides the critical capacities responsible in cases of desire as explicitly threefold: sensation, imagination, and reason. Even without the *MA*, many commentators on or those influenced by the *DA* in the Islamic world managed, through translation, to develop this threefold division of the objects of desire. The objects of desire act as unmoved movers that the animal pursues (433b14–17), just as the power that presents the object, e.g. the one capable of knowing (τὸ ἐπιστημονικόν), remains unmoved (434a16). What we seem to get then (and which will be reiterated in Arabic in a just a moment) is one power that initiates movement in place after it connects to an object that is somehow evaluated to be good, in such a way that the object is worth going after.[10] Here in the most extensive account of desire Aristotle offers, there is vagueness con-

8 *DA* 432a15–18. Translations of the *DA* are from Shields, *De Anima*.

9 See Pearson, *Aristotle on Desire*, 27–32, where he argues that Aristotle does not intend desire to exist only in terms of locomotion.

10 Exactly what all is involved in the presentation of an object as good and valuable has been

cerning from where exactly the desire generates, and in the Arabic translations this vagueness was addressed in a few different ways. Nevertheless, this discussion alone, especially without additions from other texts, sets up what I have called the non-inherent model of desire, according to which desire must work in tandem with another power that presents a valuable object for an instance of discrete desiring to occur. It thus sets up the basic framework of the non-inherent model—regardless of whether we think, in the end, it consistently or truly represents Aristotle's own account. As we will see in a moment, some interpreters of Aristotle opted for this sort of account as developed from the *DA*.

Insofar as we grant that there is one desiring power intrinsic to the soul, it might seem to complicate the claim that a non-inherent model exists at all. That is, if all powers of the soul are intrinsic to it, how could it be that any occurrent desire could be *only* coordinate and non-inherent? There are two reasons that I take this distinction to work. First, I am not talking about desire merely as a power, but as a power in act. As I highlighted in the Introduction, where I refer to desire, I refer to it as an activity, the desiring that is happening by means of the power of desire. Thus, the question is whether the *activity* of desire is inherent to the desiring individual. Recall the discussion of Plotinus in Chapter 1. There, desire was at the root of substance, so that all things were always in the activity of desiring the Good in the specific Plotinian way. That picture is fundamentally different from the non-inherent model, according to which desire is active and directed toward only some things and at some times. The substance of soul has the desiderative power as a power, but it is not necessarily always active. Second, I take the activity of the power of desire to be unique, and this is so also for two reasons, both concerning the relation of the subject of desire to the object of desire. On the one hand, we, as potential subjects of desire, do not by definition have control over the objects of our desire. We might, e.g. in an instance of daydreaming in which what we want is to daydream, but there is no guarantee that any given desire is like this. In this way, desire stands in contrast to powers of thinking and imagining, in which we have some control over the objects of thought or imagination because those objects are in our mind, memory, etc. On the other hand, objects of desire are unique insofar as we can be aware of them but not have them. This relation is different from, e.g., perception, since if the power of perception is aware of its object—if I see the red across the room—I am indeed apprehending the color red. I might need to get

a topic of extensive debate in the literature. See Moss, *Aristotle on the Apparent Good*, especially chapters 1 and 2.

more information so that the common sense can make the red intelligible, but that is a further step that happens beyond my mere apprehension of that red over there, whether it turns out to be a ball or an apple. In the case of desire, I might see the apple and desire it, but my awareness of the apple does not ensure attainment. Both points here highlight a basic feature of desire, one that Aristotle implicitly highlights by connecting desire to motion in the first place. Desire comes about only because of needs, only as a way of motivating us toward what we do not have and need in order to survive, thrive, or perfect ourselves. Its reliance on needs entails, on many but not all accounts, that we do not have desires all the time. Thus, plants do not have desire, because they do not need it: their nutrition comes from the ground. By contrast, animals need to find their food, and for that they need to move, and for *that* they need desire. Pleasure and pain join desire and locomotion to form a general motivational mechanism that explains and accounts for animal survival. And depending on the conditions within which one is working, this mechanism can be more or less complicated. Thus, the lion desires and moves towards one of those meaty-smelling things across the savannah, while the businessperson desires and works toward a deal with a silk supplier, whose silk they can use to leverage a deal with a grain supplier, whose grain they and their fellow villagers need to survive. Desire in both instances incites motion toward a goal judged or perceived to be good, and in this sense desire coordinates with the critical power that determines the good to be sought and in turn varies in complexity.

Let us now turn to the *DA* in Arabic, which in itself is a complicated endeavor. Three Arabic versions of the *DA* have come down to us. One is a paraphrase thought to be translated by the circle of al-Kindī, while the other two are translations of the *DA* itself. Of these, one is an anonymous translation, which was originally (but no longer) thought to be the translation made by Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn that Ibn al-Nadīm mentions in his *Fihrist*. The other is a translation that survives as indirectly transmitted in marginal notes by Avicenna and in commentaries by Averroes, and this translation may indeed be the one done by Isḥāq, as Ivry argues.[11] Both were surely available in al-Andalus, as Averroes discusses and even compares them. In the following, I will highlight the relevant features and differences as presented by all three. In all versions, we find that desire is connected to the three powers emphasized above. In order for an animal to move, it requires mind, imagination, or sensation plus its mover, desire: *šawq* in the paraphrase, *šahwa* and *šawq* in the anonymous translation, and variants of *šahwa* in Averroes's *Middle Commentary on the* De Anima and

11 Ivry in "The Arabic Text," 59–77.

*desiderium* in the *Long Commentary on the* De Anima. Moving forward, I will highlight the claims that influenced al-Fārābī's and, later, Ibn Bāǧǧa's understandings of motion, desire, and their relation to psychological powers. We will find that each of the three texts offers a distinct account of desire according to the models of explication we are working with, so that we find desire on models non-inherent, inherent, and mixed.

I will start with the anonymous translation, which in general seems to have been the clearest and, by staying formally true to the original, offers an account clearly on a non-inherent model as I have sketched it from the *DA*. Still, this translation is at points quite jumbled. One of the results of this jumble is that the terminology of desire is neither faithful to the Greek nor clearly delineated, although structurally the passage and the concepts therein are fairly faithful. For example, as highlighted above, the discussion in III.10 is about desire, ὄρεξις, although Aristotle also distinguishes appetite, ἐπιθυμία, and especially wish, βούλησις, as different kinds of desire, each of which relates to correct action in different ways. The translator rendered ὄρεξις as *šahwa* until the following explanation for why *šahwa* moves without reason (*bi-ġayr fikr*): "because appetite (*šahwa*) is only a sort of desire (*šawq*)."[12] This explanation translates Aristotle's own explanation of why ὄρεξις can act contrary to reason (παρὰ τὸν λογισμόν): "for appetite is some [sort] of desire" (ἡ γὰρ ἐπιθυμία ὄρεξίς τίς ἐστιν).[13] In the translation, the translator seems to have confused the genus-species relationship of desire and appetite, ὄρεξις and ἐπιθυμία, and says that *šahwa* is a sort of *šawq*, rather than identifying *šawq* as a specific type of *šahwa*, the order that would be consistent with the introduction of a new term and concept. The translator's error (if that is the right word) actually seems to be earlier, by choosing to translate ὄρεξις as *šahwa* in the first place. As far as Graeco-Arabic translations go, translating a pairing of ὄρεξις-ἐπιθυμία as *šawq-šahwa* is a reasonable expectation, since by and large *šawq* translates ὄρεξις and *šahwa* translates ἐπιθυμία, as we also find in Themistius's commentary and as I highlighted in the *Plotiniana Arabica* in the previous chapter.[14] As a result, it is not clear whether the translation retains a meaningful distinction between the two terms, as the terms are used interchangeably throughout the rest of III.10, with *šawq* more or less translating ὄρεξις from this point on. In fact, in the discussion of *DA* 433a19–26 in his *Long Comm.*, Averroes points out that something has gone wrong with

12 Badawī, *Fī l-nafs*, 82.

13 *DA* 433a25–26.

14 See also the earlier *DA* paraphrase p. 343.6, and Themistius' commentary on the *DA* in Lyons, "An Arabic Translation," 426–435, in both of which ὄρεξις-ἐπιθυμία are translated as *šawq-šahwa*.

the rendering of this particular passage, and explicitly highlights *both* translations. Of the translation he primarily uses, i.e. the one believed to be by Isḥāq, he says, "[Aristotle] said: *Desire is a certain kind of appetite* (*et desiderium est aliquis appetitus*). This is how it stood in the manuscript (*in scriptura*) and it is wrong and should be read: *Appetite is a certain kind of desire* (*et appetitus est aliquod desiderium*)."[15] This passage he contrasts with the anonymous translation we are here examining, of which he says, "This error is shown in the other translation (*alia translatio*), in which it is said: 'Appetite, however, causes motion without cogitation, because appetite is a kind of desire.' "[16]

Philosophically speaking, there are two points to highlight in the anonymous translation of *DA* III.10–11. The first is the connection of imagination to both sensation and thinking, a connection that lays the way for the threefold type of desire we find in al-Fārābī and Ibn Bāǧǧa. At the very end of III.10, the translation reads, "Each imagination is either in the direction of reason (*fikriyyan*) or in the direction of the senses (*ḥawassiyyan*)."[17] Here we have the basis for what is readily distinguished as a set of three distinct *objects* of desire that are responsible for motions of various sorts. The emphasis in the Arabic translations on sensation brought it out as an additional supplier of objects of desire, effectively giving the ensuing tradition the threefold division of *MA*. The second point I want to highlight here is the connection of movement to apprehension, *idrāk*. This term is mentioned only twice in the translation, in both cases *without* counterpart in the Greek. The first at the beginning of III.10, where we read, "In the rest of the animals, there is apprehension only by the imagination (*bi-l-tawahhum*) and by deliberation (*bi-l-fikr*)," for the Greek, "In the other animals there is neither contemplation nor reason, but imagination."[18] In the enumeration of the powers of soul the translator includes, "the power of apprehension by the understanding (*quwwat idrāk bi-l-fahm*)", for the Greek νοητικόν.[19] I highlight the introduction of this notion because apprehension becomes crucial in accounting for conative movement in general, and will be critical in Ibn Ṭufayl's account of desire. The notion of apprehension is also not found in the earlier paraphrase, to which I now turn.

The earlier translation of the paraphrase is more difficult to analyze, but worth highlighting insofar as it is likely the earliest source of the *DA* in the

15 Averroes, *Averrois Cordubensis*, 519. Translations of this text from Averroes, *Long Commentary*, 416. This bit is not included in Averroes's *Middle Commentary on the* De Anima.

16 Averroes, *Averrois*, 519, and Averroes, *Long Commentary*, 416.

17 Badawī, *Fī l-nafs*, 84.

18 Badawī, 82, and *DA* 433a11–12.

19 Badawī, 83, and *DA* 433b3.

Islamic world. A result of the nature of the text is that, to the extent we can analyze it according to the two models, it is mixed. The translation is also clearly influenced by the Arabic Plotinus materials, which goes some way to obfuscate clear transmission of the ideas, above the alteration of the text itself. The paraphrase differs substantially from the anonymous translation insofar as it emphasizes different kinds of desire, rather than simply desire plus an object from mind or imagination, which to some extent also emphasizes the threefold series more strongly. Further, the paraphrase includes the notion of two worlds, one of mind and another of sense and the body. To some extent, this addition of the two worlds grounds and is wrapped up in the delineation of different *kinds* of desire. The first point occurs repeatedly throughout the paraphrase. We find, for example, the claim that, "Desire (*šawq*) is of two kinds, sensory (*ḥassī*) and rational (*fikrī*), because the desire is either from the realm of sense or from the realm of reason."[20] It is specified that "rational desire, which is from the realm of reason, is at first from the imagination."[21] It is worth noting that the division of desire in this way is reminiscent of a passage from the *Epistle on Divine Science* I examined in the previous chapter. In *DS* 219–223, the adaptation distinguishes first and second desire, the latter of which he identifies as sensible desire (*al-šawq al-ḥassī*), while the former is higher than it and imperceptible to the senses.[22] The next paraphrase passage distinguishing different types of *desire* renders 433a20 ff.: "The cause of motion is one, namely, desire, for whenever motion is incited by the imagination or by intellect, they both move only by the intermediate (*bi-tawassuṭ*) of desire."[23] The specification that desire is an intermediate acknowledges its role as a coordinator with different powers, this aspect being an inheritance of the non-inherent model of the *DA*. However, desire then again breaks into three different kinds: "Desire is either sensory (*ḥassiyyan*), or imaginative (*wahmiyyan*), or intellectual (*ʿaqliyyan*)."[24] Here we find a description similar to one I highlighted above, except that these specifications are ascribed to *desire* rather than to imagination as in the original and in the anonymous translation, the latter of which reads, "Each imagination is either in the direction of reason or in the direction of the senses." To the extent that desire itself seems to be differentiated in kind rather than the

20 Aristoteles' *De Anima*, 331.9–10. This bifurcation is repeated on 333.5–7. Translations of the paraphrase are my own.

21 Aristoteles' *De Anima*, 331.15–16.

22 It is also worth considering on this point the Neoplatonic "Treatise on the Two Worlds," in Rosenthal, "Aš-Šayḫ al-Yûnânî (Concluded)," 42–66. On the notions of two worlds in the *DA* paraphrase see also 319.5–9.

23 Aristoteles' *De Anima*, 341.17–18.

24 Aristoteles' *De Anima*, 343.2.

*objects* differentiating the desire, this division would seem to attribute a generic desire inherent to the powers (or as above, realms). In general, the paraphrase's description of desire's exact relation to other powers is unclear. Further, we see again a tripartite account of the levels on which desire operates. In fact, since this translation is of a late ancient paraphrase, it may itself be the source of the threefold division from the *MA*, which the late ancient author might have incorporated into the paraphrase originally.

The last passage from the paraphrase I would like to highlight is an explication of motion according to a fourfold structure in which desire and the desired object both play the role of particular causes. The passage is historically and philosophically interesting, insofar as it appears to be a reworking of Aristotle's tripartite explanation of local motion through the mover (τὸ κινοῦν), the instrument by which the moved moves (ᾧ κινεῖ), and that which is moved (τὸ κινούμενον) in *DA* 433b14–18.

> He says that there are four causes for local motion: a formal cause, a final cause, an agent cause, and an instrumental cause. The formal cause is the motion itself. The final (*tamāmiyya*) cause is the thing desired (*muštāq*). The agent cause is of two sorts, one of which is an ultimate cause and the other a proximate [cause]. So, the ultimate agent cause is the imagination and the intellect, and the proximate agent cause is desire (*šawq*). The instrumental cause is the moving spirit (*al-rūḥ al-muḥarrik*), and we call it the bodily pneuma (*rūḥan jismāniyyan*).[25]

Of course, Aristotle himself does not explicitly discuss local motion in terms of the four causes. And although it is not unthinkable that one might characterize Aristotle's account of local motion in such a way, I have not found such a characterization before the paraphrase. In the commentary tradition there is a history of counting the explanations of motion as *four*fold (that is not a far jump from the original text), although nowhere have I found it explicated in terms of the four *causes*.

Finally, let us look at briefly at what Averroes transmits of (what is probably) Isḥāq's translation. There is only one point on which I want to linger, namely, the connection of desire to the apprehending powers. What we find in this translation is important because it is an example of solving the difficulty of relating desire and reason by identifying the two. First, the terminology of this translation is different, and ὄρεξις is consistently rendered using variants of

25 Aristoteles' *De Anima*, 343.7–12.

*šahwa*. Above I quoted Averroes from his *Long Comm*. in the discussion of the anonymous translation, in which Averroes notes the mistake in the translation he used. The text transmitted by Averroes specifically identifies the desiring power and the powers of imagination and intellect, such that these two powers *themselves* desire their objects. For the *DA* claim in 433a18–20, "For the object of desire initiates motion and because of this thought initiates motion, because its starting point is the object of desire" (τὸ ὀρεκτὸν γὰρ κινεῖ, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἡ διάνοια κινεῖ, ὅτι ἀρχὴ αὐτῆς ἐστι τὸ ὀρεκτόν), we find there has been a slight change preserved in both the *Middle Comm*. and *Long Comm*. on the *DA*. In the Arabic of the *Middle Comm*. we read, "When it elicits motion, the intellect or imagination desires [the object] (*ištahā al-ʿaql aw-l-taḫayyul*); and, when the desiring person moves owing to it—that is, owing to the desiring faculty, which is the intellect and imagination (*al-quwwa al-muštahiyya allatī al-ʿaql wa-l-taḫayyul*) [...]."[26] In the surviving Latin of the *Long Comm*. we find, "For the object of desire causes motion and for this reason cogitation causes movement, because it is a desiderative [power] (*desideratum enim movet, et ideo cogitatio movet, quia est desiderativa*)," with mind alone as the example.[27] Regardless, the point is clear—the desiring power is not a separate power, but is the intellect or imagination itself, each of which also holds the object of desire. The editors of both texts note the changes, and in his note on the passage, Ivry points to the coincidence of the Arabic and Latin in "the identical formulation that the appetitive faculty *is* the intellect or imagination, rather than being merely involved with them (as one manuscript seems to indicate). In this striking manner, Averroës may wish to express his belief in the fundamental unity of the faculties of the soul."[28] In fact, Averroes emphasizes this point in the following passages, mentioning several times that it is the imagination or intellect that desires or to which desire belongs.[29] Further, he offers an explanation that bears out Ivry's suggestion. Although in Aristotle's division of the parts of a moved animal in *DA* 433b13–18, we find a threefold distinction ("there are three things, first, what initiates motion, second, that by which it initiates motion, and further, third, what is moved," 433b13–14) and then a twofold distinction of the mover ("that which initiates motion is twofold, in the one instance being unmoved and in the other initiating motion while being moved," 433b14–15), Averroes rejects

26 Averroës, *Middle Commentary*, 126, slightly altered.

27 Averroes, *Averrois Cordubensis*, 517; Averroes, *Long Commentary*, 414.

28 Averroës, *Middle Commentary*, 208n7.

29 See, for example, his discussion of 433b10–21, in both the Latin and the Arabic: Averroes, *Averrois Cordubensis*, 523, and Averroes, *Long Commentary*, 421; and Averroës, *Middle Commentary*, 128.

the division between the mover and that by which the animal is moved. He says that, "Were an animal to have two [independent] sources of motion—the intellect by itself and desire by itself—then the motion induced by each one would be an incidental sort, essential motion having to derive from a nature common to them both."[30] Thus, we have here in the translation of the *DA* that Averroes gives us a conceptual adjustment, since the claim that imagination or intellect *themselves* desire something is an *inherent* interpretation of the Greek claim, "For [the object of desire] moves unmoved, by being thought or being imagined" (τοῦτο γὰρ κινεῖ οὐ κινούμενον, τῷ νοηθῆναι ἢ φανταστῆναι).[31] Averroes joins this account with the powers theory insofar as there are multiple desiring powers, each with its own inherent genus of desire.[32] Here we can see that the translator himself and one of the most astute commentators on Aristotle's texts found it easy enough to understand the meaning of the *DA* along an inherent model, insofar as the desire is inherent to the power of imagination or to the power of thinking. There is an important difference here between, for example, what we saw in Plotinus and what we will see in Ibn Ṭufayl, insofar as the desire in this version of the *DA* has many object and is thus truly generic. In what way this inherent desire relates to evaluations by reason is an open question. Nevertheless, Ibn Ṭufayl, as I will argue in chapter six, uses a similar understanding of the relation between desire and the power of apprehension, insofar as he grants inherent desiring to all powers of apprehension, including the senses. (The inherent desire for God, by contrast, will be for one specific object.) Further, in Averroes's texts we find, as in the anonymous translation, emphasis on apprehension, and read, "The imagination or intellect apprehends (*yudriku*) the desired object initially and, when apprehending it, desires it."[33] Ibn Ṭufayl will also emphasize the role of apprehension or *idrāk* in the process of desire, the role of apprehension without attainment being basic to the structure of desire as such.

From this examination of the three texts, it is clear that the presentation of Aristotle's account of desire and its relation to the other powers of the soul was inconsistently transmitted. We get, in turn, three different presentations of desire's relation to the other powers. In addition to Averroes, in 6th/12th century al-Andalus we find thinkers picking sides, in a way, as to which of

30 Averroes, *Middle Commentary*, 126–127. Potentially his explanation is in reference to *DA* 432b3–7.

31 Aristotle, *DA* 433b11–12.

32 Averroes also seems to interpret desire in this way in his commentary on Plato's *Republic*. See, for example, *Averroes on Plato's* Republic, 90–91.

33 Averroes, *Middle Commentary*, 126.

the two interpretations is correct. Below, we will see Ibn Bāğğa and Ibn Ṭufayl disagree on the relation of desire to the rest of the soul in a way that has extensive correlating philosophical consequences. While we cannot with confidence draw a connection between either thinker and any given translation, Averroes' text at least attests to what should have been available. Further, the complicated textual history of the *DA* makes clear the effects that a small change in translation can have on the reception of a text and concept. It is worth reminding us that desire in the *ThA* also operated according to an inherent model of desire. To what extent that text, attributed to Aristotle, might have influenced either the translations or the interpretation of the *DA* in general, is left to conjecture. Regardless, we have seen now quite the variety of positions attributed to Aristotle on desire and its relation to the [powers of the] desiring subject.

Before moving on to examine al-Fārābī's own discussions of desire, I need to address a more recent interpretation of Aristotle's account of desire that effectively construes his account according to a holistic and general inherent model of desire as I have defined it in this book. Josh Hayes argues for an account of Aristotelian substance as dynamic and desiring, reinterpreting Aristotle's ἐντελέχεια in terms of his account of desire, ὄρεξις.[34] On this account, the soul, as an efficient cause, strives always through desire to realize its life activities, this striving effectively being what it is to be alive.[35] This account stands in contrast to a static account of substance, and introduces desire as a basic level of the being. Since, in turn, desire would be part of any subject's being what it is, this understanding would have Aristotle's account of desire unequivocally following an inherent model of desire. In fact, it does not sound too dissimilar to the function of desire in Plotinus that I examined in the first chapter. Hayes' account concludes that, "Desire cannot be disassociated from the efficient cause of the soul responsible for actively striving toward and always maintaining its *entelecheia* as the most intrinsic possibility of its being," and that, "Desire as a source of movement thereby determines what it is for a thing to be alive."[36] But this account has a basic flaw: it does not hold for plants and plant souls. Part of the reason for this oversight seems to be a misunderstanding of the relation of desire to nutrition with respect to life sustainment, and then another with respect to the relation between δύναμις and desire.

First, in the crucial step at which plant soul and nutrition are discussed, we have a gap in the argument. After highlighting that the nutritive capacity is the basic, necessary condition of life (following *DA* 413a32–413b2), Hayes claims

34 Hayes, "Being Ensouled."
35 Hayes, 332.
36 Hayes, 332.

that the nutritive power "critically informs" every other power, and that, "one cannot strictly disassociate the striving movement of appetitive desire from the nutritive movement of self-preservation," since Aristotle claims that all living things have life through nutrition.[37] This claim receives no support outside of Aristotle's claim that nutrition is a necessary condition for life, and therefore a basic and unique capacity in living beings. Hayes alludes to nutrition as a source of motion, claiming that, "Nutrition as a source of movement essentially belongs to the other capacities of the soul insofar as it grounds and presides over them in order to express their functions as capacities striving to meet their ends."[38] There are two problems here. The fact that all things that live are alive insofar as they take in nutrition does not entail that nutrition rules over them, only that it is a necessary condition of their being alive, and that it is not the same as an organizing or architectonic role. Further, that nutrition is responsible for motion does not entail that it strives in the same way desire strives. Nutrition, responsible for the motions of growth and diminution, is not connected to desire in Aristotle's account in *DA* III.10–11, where he speaks only of locomotion.[39] Desire comes about for animals when they have sense perception, and desire goes together with pleasure and pain to work toward the preservation of the animal, according to the animal's *nature*.[40] Generally, Aristotle also speaks of this desiring as requiring some kind of discriminative or cognitive capacity, if even sensation alone, and plants of course lack any such capacity.[41] As a result, the general claim that desiring is the essential function of souls and connected to living as such is not warranted.[42]

---

37 Hayes, 320.

38 Hayes, 320.

39 Another point of confusion (especially for the reader) is that Hayes nowhere differentiates between the four types of motion that Aristotle distinguishes in *DA* 406a12–14, and although he seems to treat them as interchangeable, he never explicitly acknowledges doing so.

40 For such an extensionalist account, see Corcilius, "Aristotle's Definition," 132–137, esp. 135–136.

41 On this point and for an intensionalist reading, see Moss, *The Apparent Good*, ch. 1; and then Pearson, *Aristotle on Desire*, ch. 3, esp. his conclusion on p. 87. I discuss this point further below.

42 Hayes's account of nutrition as a basic life principle that is fundamentally connected to desire and that, together with desire, is the basic meaning of substance or ἐντελέχεια, may be largely informed by the Giorgio Agamben essay he cites in passing. There, in "Absolute Immanence," Agamben's interpretation of Aristotle on nutrition is largely influenced by and discussed together with Spinoza on life and conatus. Indeed, the account that Hayes offers sounds remarkably Spinozist, and the notion of desire for which he argues functions more or less the same as Spinoza's account of conatus (for which the notion of *potentia* is

Second, Hayes identifies δύναμις as being founded in desire, rather than understanding desire as a kind of δύναμις, claiming, "Once we begin to consider desire as a kind of dynamic principle that fundamentally grounds Aristotle's account of *dunamis*, desire does not merely become more closely affiliated with the other capacities, specifically nutrition, sense perception, intellect, and *logos*, but ultimately inseparable from them."[43] Part of the problem here is that desire seems to be interpreted as responsible for *all* types of motion, rather than only for locomotion. Thus, any change is understood to implicate desire, which Aristotle does not claim. Connecting Aristotle's account of potentiality from *Met*. Theta to *DA* III.10, Hayes elides the two accounts and attributes striving to δύναμις, and therefore to all powers that go from potentiality to actuality. However, teleology by itself does not, for Aristotle, entail desire as such. In the discussion of potentiality at the beginning of *Met*. Theta, Aristotle does not connect potentiality to desire, and desire is mentioned only once in an example, when, in his discussion of change, Aristotle refers to what sorts of attributes are ascribed to non-existent things, such as that they are desired, ἐπιθυμητά.[44] There is, on the whole, no indication that Aristotle ever intends his notion of δύναμις to build on his account of desire from *DA* III.10–11. Even ceding Hayes's description of desire as a "dynamic principle"—a formulation that, along with his analysis of στέρησις, I find helpful—, the fact that desire works on the same structure of δύναμις does not entail that desire and δύναμις are coextensive, only that desire is one *sort* of δύναμις, as Aristotle himself concludes in *DA* 433a31–433b1 (ὅτι μὲν οὖν ἡ τοιαύτη δύναμις κινεῖ τῆς ψυχῆς, ἡ καλουμένη ὄρεξις, φανερόν). As result of these two points, Hayes's ultimate claim that, "Desire as a striving movement fulfills a holistic function by providing teleological unity as an efficient cause to the various capacities of the soul to ensure the self-preservation of the living being," is unfounded.[45]

Although I do not think Aristotle's text supports this account, the undertaking is valuable because it shows the extent to which an inherent understanding of desire in Aristotle is both tempting and might be plausible. Plotinus's interpretation and extrapolation of Aristotle's account of desire gives us some of the aspects for which Hayes argues, for example that desire is basic to substance

---

also important). As I argue here, I do not think Aristotle's text bears out this comparison. For the passage to which I refer, see Agamben, "Absolute Immanence," in *Potentialities*, 236–237.

43 Hayes, "Being Ensouled," 325.

44 *Met*. IX.3, 1047a30–1047b2. Cf. Makin's commentary, in Aristotle, *Metaphysics Book Θ*, 80–81.

45 Hayes, "Being Ensouled," 325.

and that the δύναμις that drives substance is essentially desiring. But, as I argued in the first chapter, Plotinus's account required some radical changes to Aristotle's accounts of desire, changes that go far beyond what Aristotle claims in his own discussion of desire. Thus, for the sake of this investigation, I will restrict the concept of desire to the narrower phenomenon Aristotle discusses. In the end, we have so far found multiple translators and commentators on Aristotle's account of desire from the *DA* negotiating in what way exactly desire relates to Aristotle's power psychology, and even whether the desiderative power is itself a discrete power in a basic sense. In this chapter, we have not yet examined desire within the human process of intellection, only desire as it relates to motion and thus to practical intellect and action. Turning to al-Fārābī, we will find that he extends human desire to intellection and interprets it in part according to the account from *DA*.

## 2 Al-Fārābī on Desire

Al-Fārābī's general account of human desire in his comprehensive political works clearly follows a non-inherent model of desire along the lines of the *DA*. Although he frequently refers to desire as such with variants of *šawq*, we find a distinct terminology in his work that Ibn Bāǧǧa later adopts and uses extensively. Al-Fārābī discusses desire in terms of the *striving* (*nuzūʿiyya*) power in both his *Political Regime* (*Kitāb al-siyāsa l-madaniyya*) and his *On the Perfect State* (*Mabādiʾ ārāʾ ahl al-madīna l-fāḍila*), in which he offers largely but not wholly the same account, and his views on desire are clearly influenced by the discussion of desire found in *DA* III.10–11. He also, famously, develops the notion of the will, which I will highlight but not discuss extensively since it is not taken up by either of our Andalusīs, save a brief mention by Ibn Bāǧǧa. At the beginning of the investigation into political communities in *Political Regime* al-Fārābī discusses the different types of human will. Here al-Fārābī specifies that desire comes from the striving part of the soul.

> The will (*irāda*) is in the first instance only desire (*šawq*) from sensation, desire by the striving part (*al-juzʾ al-nuzūʿiyya*) and sensation by the sensitive part. Then there arises after that the imaginative part of the soul, and the desire following it, so that a second will arises after the first. So this will is desire from imagination. After these two arise it is possible for the first instances of awareness to arise, which arise from the active intellect in the rational part. And at that time a third sort of the will occurs in the human being, and is desire from reason, and this is what is distinguished

> by the name "choice," and this is that which is in the human being as a distinguishing feature outside of the rest of the animals.[46]

Al-Fārābī distinguishes three different kinds of desire following upon the threefold desire articulated based on the *DA*, each of which follows after one of the three powers. It is clear that these desires develop sequentially and pertain to action, the last sort of desire being available only to human beings. The relation between the different kinds of desire and the striving part of the soul is clearer in al-Fārābī's discussion in the *On the Perfect State*. There, in chapter 10, he lists the various powers present in the human being: nutrition, sensation, imagination, and the rational (*nāṭiqa*) power, later distinguished into the practical (*ʿamaliyya*) and theoretical (*naẓariyya*). Importantly, he makes clear that theoretical reason, *nāṭiqa naẓariyya*, rules over *all* powers, which is relevant to the way in which it relates to desire. For, as he proceeds to discuss the striving power, theoretical reason is conspicuously absent.

> All of these [powers] are linked to the striving power, and the striving serves sensation, and imagination, and reason. And it is not possible for the subservient apprehending (*al-mudrika*) powers to carry out the service and act without the striving power. For sensation, imagination, and reflection are not sufficient for acting, outside of being linked to that desire for what is sensed, or imagined, or thought about, or known, because will is to strive by the striving power to what is apprehended.[47]

Here we find the striving power explicitly linked with all three powers seen above. The striving power is presented as a sort of servant of the rest of the powers, but one that they in turn need in order to act at all. By relegating striving and desire to an inferior position, he highlights their need for a discriminative power to act. Discussing desire within the sphere of action, al-Fārābī ties striving to the *subservient* apprehending powers, and falls short of explicitly ascribing desire to theoretical reason. Although the striving power itself does not have a direct relation to apprehension, striving is doubly at work in his definition of will, which is that one strives by the striving power itself. Further, in this account we see the legacy of the emphasis on awareness in the translations of *DA*, which here plays a necessary role in desire formation. At a more basic

46 Al-Fārābī, *Kitab al-Siyāsa*, 72; al-Fārābī, *Political Regime*, 65, translations modified for consistency.

47 Al-Fārābī, *Mabādiʾ*, 208–209. Translations of this text follow Walzer with frequent modifications.

level, al-Fārābī distinguishes a hierarchy within and with respect to the striving power. In his initial discussion of the striving power, he explains its dimensions as follows.

> The striving power—by which desire or dislike of a thing occurs—has a ruling power and subordinates. It is the power which makes the will arise; for will is a striving towards or away from what has been apprehended either by sense-perception or by imagination or by the power of reason and a judgment on whether it ought to be occupied or rejected. Striving is brought about by the ruling power of striving only … These powers, then, which are in parts of the body like [the limbs] are all of them bodily instruments and subordinate to the ruling striving power within the heart.[48]

This passage again reflects the *DA*, and emphasizes even more strongly the auxiliary role of desire. The striving power is a sophisticated unity comprising a primary striving power seated, along with the innate heat and life source, in the heart, together with many subordinate powers that manifest in the various limbs of the body that an individual might use to fill or satisfy any given desire. Thus, al-Fārābī understands desire still within the framework of locomotion and of the moving heat within the body that in turn moves the body. In fact, these passages have not made clear any connection between desire and theoretical reason, since in the above passages al-Fārābī addresses desire in the subordinate, i.e. non-theoretical, apprehending powers. Nevertheless, and as will be clearer in the following section, he extends the connection of desire to theoretical reason as well. Al-Fārābī initiates a subtle but important expansion of Aristotle's theory by extending this desire to intellection, which Ibn Bāǧǧa capitalizes on and makes essential to human activity, as David Wirmer has also highlighted.[49] In the *Political Regime*, al-Fārābī connects desire to theoretical reason, *nāṭiqa naẓariyya*. There, he connects happiness and the will specifically to this highest power, saying

> Happiness, which only the human being can intellect and be conscious of, is [cognized] by means of the theoretical-rational power—not by any other of the rest of the powers—and that is when he uses the principles

48 Al-Fārābī, *Mabādi'*, 170–171.

49 Wirmer, "Das natürliche Begehren," 228. I am indebted to Wirmer's article for bringing the following two passages to bear on this debate.

> and the first cognitions that the active intellect gave him. For when he is cognizant of it, he then desires (*ištāqa*) it by means of the striving power. He deliberates by means of the practical-rational [power] about what he ought to do, so as to gain it.[50]

This is the only passage of which I am aware in which al-Fārābī explicitly attributes desire to the *theoretical* reason, i.e. *nāṭiqa naẓarīyya*. Even here, the desire employs practical reason, with theoretical reason as a kind of overseer in the way we know from *On the Perfect State*. In *On the Perfect State*, al-Fārābī does not explicitly attribute desire to theoretical reason, although his explanation sounds similar to the discussion from *Political Regime*.

> When these [primary] intelligibles become present in the human being, careful examination (*ta'ammul*), reflection (*rawīya*), practical thought (*fikr*) and a desire (*tašawwuq*) to find out things arise in [this person] by nature, and a striving towards some of his thoughts in the first instance and a desire for them and [a striving] towards some of what he finds out, or alternatively a dislike of it.[51]

When the striving works in conjunction with sensation or imagination, it is called 'will', and when it works in conjunction with deliberation or "rational thought in general (*nuṭq bi-jumla*)" it is called choice, *iḫtiyār*. The connection of this desire to choice and will again connect the theoretical desire here, if we may call it that, to the sphere of action. As discussed and debated in al-Andalus, a general criticism of al-Fārābī's commentary on the *EN* was that it did not allow for human happiness outside of the human being's existence in the material world. Seeing the ambivalence with which he ascribes to theoretical reason—the only power that can work completely without the body—desire or connection to happiness outside of action gives some context to this accusation.

There is another way in which al-Fārābī discusses desire or striving that does not so clearly operate on a non-inherent model, namely, the presence of desire in the first cause and the procession of celestial intellects. This aspect of al-Fārābī's thought reveals his Neoplatonic leanings as he describes the production of celestial intellects through emanation. He gives two slightly different accounts of striving or desire in the generation and activity of the intellects

50 Al-Fārābī, *Kitab al-Siyāsa*, 73; al-Fārābī, *Political Regime*, 63–64.

51 Al-Fārābī, *Mabādi'*, 204–205.

in the *Political Regime* and *On the Perfect State*. In both texts, the first cause is described as the object of love and desire. In the former, he says

> And it is similar [with] its admiration for its essence and its passionate love (*ʿišq*) for its essence. So that what is loved first and admired first (*al-maḥbūb awwalan wa-l-maʿjūb awwalan*) in [each intellect's] soul is what it intellects of the first [cause] and, second, what it intellects of its essence. The first [cause], then, according to its relation to these [intellects] as well, is the first object of love and the first object of desire.[52]

In the latter, he describes the intellects' relation to the first in the following way.

> What passionately loves (*ʿāšiq*) in us, then, is not identical with what is passionately loved (*maʿšūq*) in us. But, in the First's case, what passionately loves is the same as what is passionately loved, and what loves (*al-muḥibb*) is what is loved (*al-maḥbūb*). It is the first object of love and the first object of desire (*al-maḥbūb al-awwal wa-l-maʿšūq al-awwal*), whether something other than it loves it or does not love it, or something other than it passionately desires it, or does not desire it.[53]

This description of the first cause is largely reminiscent both of the depiction of Intellect and soul's desire for the One in the Arabic Plotinus materials, but also of Aristotle's description of the first cause in *Met*. Lambda, one of Plotinus's own inspirations. In both of al-Fārābī's passages, we find that the first cause is the first object of love and desire, *al-maḥbūb al-awwal wa-l-maʿšūq al-awwal*. In the first passage, the first cause is the first of two objects of love and desire, the second of which seems to be each desiring subject's own intellect. In the second passage, the first cause is again the first object of love and desire, except that here al-Fārābī emphasizes the first's own love and desire for *itself*, since, as an intellect and the *first* intellect, the only possible object of its attention is itself. The description of the first cause as *al-maḥbūb al-awwal wa-l-maʿšūq al-awwal* is reminiscent of a passage from *GS* IX.12 (which itself is transmitted by al-Šahrastānī *after* al-Fārābī), in which the first is said to be *maḥbūban maʿšūqan*, desired by high and low forms.[54] Walzer highlights the similarity between the description of the first cause in the *On the Perfect State*

52 Al-Fārābī, *Kitab al-Siyāsa*, 52; al-Fārābī, *Political Regime*, 46.

53 Al-Fārābī, *Mabādiʾ*, 88–89.

54 *GS* IX.12, Henry–Schwyzer 483, al-Šahrastānī 332.

and that of the One found in Plotinus's VI.8(39).15 as being "At once loveable and love and love of himself."[55] However, in al-Fārābī's more likely ultimate source, *Met*. Lambda, Aristotle discusses the first cause as the primary object of desire and of thought. In the Arabic translation transmitted by Averroes, we find the following:

> It moves just like the object of desire (*al-muštahā*) and the object of thought (*al-maʿqūl*) move, since it is not moved. And the principles of these are the same in themselves, and the object of desire (*al-mutašawwiq*) is the good (*ḥasan*), which is separate and the first thing wanted (*al-murād al-awwal*), which is good.[56]

This passage translates *Met*. 1072a26–28: "It moves like the object of desire (τὸ ὀρεκτόν) and the object of thought, moving but not moved. The firsts of those are the same, for the object of appetite (ἐπιθυμητόν) is that which appears good, but the object of rational choice (βουλητόν) is foremost the good." While one cannot identify al-Fārābī's exact object of inspiration for his description of the first cause, the use of the terminology of the Arabic Plotinus together with the description of the first cause of the *Met*. testifies to the extent the two textual traditions were merged.

In addition to the first intellect, al-Fārābī ascribes passionate love, *ʿišq*, to the secondary intellects in the *On the Perfect State*, while in the *Political Regime* he says that those intellects do not strive, *saʿy*, for anything. In the former text, each of the ten celestial intellects has love for the first cause, the self-love of each increasing when it thinks the first:

> [Each celestial intellect's] admiration of its own essence and its passionate love (*ʿišq*) for it whenever it thinks something of the first is increased over its admiration of its essence and its passionate desire for it whenever it thinks something of its essence in proportion to the degree in which the splendor and beauty of the first surpasses the splendor and beauty of its own essence. Thus, the object of love and admiration is in the first instance the first as thought by it, and in the second instance its own essence as thought by itself. By virtue of its relation to these ten [separate intellects the first] is always the first object of love and the first object of desire.[57]

55 Al-Fārābī, *Mabādiʾ*, 352–353.

56 Averroes, *Tafsīr mā baʿda l-ṭabīʿa*, 1592, my translation.

57 Al-Fārābī, *Mabādiʾ*, 118–119.

This description of the intellects' relation to the first is set within a discussion of the order of the intellects between the celestial world and the first. Thus, although desire for and intellection of the first lead to greater admiration, love, and, as we find out elsewhere, pleasure, the desire present in these higher level intellects does not seem to be *functional*: on al-Fārābī's account, the intellecting does the work, and in *On the Perfect State* desire even seems appended as an afterthought. The main motivation for the intellects rather seems to be the pleasure that follows upon the intellection of the first cause, which is emphasized in both the *Political Regime* and *On the Perfect State*. This aspect of al-Fārābī's account brings into focus the influence of *Met*. Lambda on his conception of the intellects and their motivation, since the pleasure that follows upon intellection is one aspect of Aristotle's thought that, relatively speaking, Plotinus does not emphasize. As we will see, Ibn Bāǧǧa does not incorporate this aspect of al-Fārābī's thought into his work, which reveals a selective approach on the part of Ibn Bāǧǧa, since this aspect is the most directly Neoplatonic.[58] However, with respect to al-Fārābī's use of the non-inherent model of desire, the desire of the celestial intellects presents a point of departure, to which I return below.

## 3 Al-Fārābī on Aristotle on Desire

I have remarked throughout this book on the fact that Aristotle's different remarks on desire posed a unique problem from interpreters who want to combine general claims about human desire with Aristotle's powers theory that is most immediately applicable to locomotion and human action. To some extent, we saw this split in the previous section in al-Fārābī's remarks on desire within the human soul as opposed to celestial intellects. On the topic of human desire in particular, al-Fārābī offers a unique interpretation that Ibn Bāǧǧa later develops. As I will argue in this section, the goal of al-Fārābī's interpretation of Aristotle on desire is clearly to offer an account of the role of desire within human intellection and logical inquiry that sits comfortably with the powers account from the *DA*. Key to this account is a text hitherto unmentioned: Aristotle's *APo*, which both al-Fārābī and Ibn Bāǧǧa interpret in light of an account of natural, human desire, and which Ibn Bāǧǧa further connects to a non-inherent account of *DA*. Interestingly, the discussion at issue does not occur in al-Fārābī's

58 Ibn Bāǧǧa's ability to discern Neoplatonic elements is not surprising given the milieu in which he worked and was educated. More on this point at the beginning of the next chapter.

remarks on the *APo*, but in his general work on Aristotle, fittingly titled *The Philosophy of Aristotle* (*Falsafat Arisṭūṭālīs*). We will see that al-Fārābī reinterprets general claims about seeking to ones about desiring, and thereby explicitly connecting Aristotle's *DA* account with theoretical knowledge and logical inquiry, outside of practical reasoning. In so doing, he makes it possible for Ibn Bāǧǧa to set desire and logic together as vehicle and driver on the path toward human perfection and ultimate satisfaction.

Let us start at the beginning of *Phil. of Aristotle*, as it will take some work to discern which of Aristotle's discussions al-Fārābī has in mind. One of the first main aims of the text is to present the properly human activity according to Aristotle (according to al-Fārābī). This argument unfolds by identifying first what is naturally desired by all human beings, delineating among types of desired objects, and then determining which are proper to human beings alone. *Salāma*—security, health, or (henceforth) soundness—characterizes the first set of things that all human beings (*al-jamīʿ*) primarily seek out (*al-maṭlūbāt al-awwal*) as desirable goods (*ḫayrāt mutašawwaqa*), according to al-Fārābī's own interpretation of Aristotle's corpus.[59] First and foremost, people desire the soundness of their bodies and senses, as well as the soundness of the powers that lead to their soundness. These desires all relate to what is useful and, ultimately, to practical knowledge and sciences. But there are other things that human beings seem to desire by nature as well, things that are different in kind from the soundness initially described. In addition to this soundness,

> The soul desires (*mutašawwiqa*) to understand (*al-wuqūf ʿalā*) the causes (*asbāb*) of sensible things, of what is observed in the heavens and on earth, and of what [one] sees in [one's] soul and the state in which [one] finds [one's soul], [and desires] to know the truth of what occurs in souls and comes to the mind (*al-bāl*).[60]

None of these things, as al-Fārābī observes, concerns the soundness that human beings primarily desire as good.[61] Nevertheless, he also observes that human beings, when they obtain this knowledge, both judge themselves to be nobler and more excellent, and take pleasure in obtaining this knowledge. As a result,

---

59 Al-Fārābī, *Falsafat Arisṭūṭālīs*, 59–60; al-Fārābī, *Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, 71–72. Translations are Mahdi's, with slight modifications for clarity.

60 Al-Fārābī, *Falsafat Arisṭūṭālīs*, 60; al-Fārābī, *Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, 72.

61 In his examination of this text, Wirmer identifies the desires as being five-fold. See his "Das natürliche Begehren," 219.

al-Fārābī needs to explain the way in which this *theoretical* knowledge, which is not useful for baseline human flourishing and is for its own sake, relates to the *practical* knowledge that concerns what is useful for the soundness of the body and senses. Thus, from the outset of his summary of Aristotle's philosophy, al-Fārābī highlights two different realms of knowledge to which distinct desires attach. We have, on the one hand, practical knowledge that relates to the soundness of the body and senses, marked both by the desire for their preservation and by the desire attaching to practical reason, will, and choice. On the other, we have theoretical knowledge of causes, marked by a different innate, natural desire, which, as we will see in a moment, al-Fārābī flags not only as an additional sort of desire, but one that might be unwarranted.[62]

The connection to logic begins here. In the following section al-Fārābī makes clear that practical and theoretical sciences share three kinds of apprehensions (*mudrakāt*), which he lists as "(1) sensations, (2) primary cognitions by a knowledge beyond what is supplied by sensation, and (3) cognition resulting from investigation and consideration (*faḥṣ wa-ta'ammul*)."[63] He then explicates these types of apprehension in terms of a basic logical structure, saying, "The primary cognitions employed to explain what one seeks to know are the *premises* (*muqaddamāt*). What one seeks to know are the *topics of inquiry* (*maṭlūbāt*) (once they are known, he calls them *conclusions* (*natā'iǧ*))."[64]

Before moving on to discuss Aristotle's logical works, al-Fārābī asks an unusual question that, I think, reveals his awareness of the possible tension in Aristotle's work between his account of desire within power psychology and his general statements elsewhere regarding natural human desire. Al-Fārābī considers whether the desire human beings have to obtain knowledge that is beyond the realm of useful, practical knowledge is appropriate for a human being in general. Specifically, he asks whether the search for theoretical knowledge is an "overreaching" due to appetite, or whether it is that which accomplishes the true completion of the human being.

> Is the soul's desire (*tatašawwaqu*) to reach the highest excellence an intemperance of the appetites (*šahawāt*) and overreaching toward what is not for the human being to achieve or do, or is acquiring the highest

62 For a fuller analysis of the text and in what way it relates to this problem, see again Wirmer, "Das natürliche Begehren," 219–221.

63 Al-Fārābī, *Falsafat Arisṭūṭālīs*, 63; al-Fārābī, *Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, 75.

64 Al-Fārābī, *Falsafat Arisṭūṭālīs*, 63; al-Fārābī, *Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, 75. Cf. also al-Fārābī's discussion of the parallel structure of theoretical and practical syllogisms in his *Risāla fī-l-ʿaql*, 8–10; *On the Intellect*, 70.

> excellence of each one of these the most perfectly human and the most appropriate thing for the human being?[65]

Al-Fārābī argues for the latter by highlighting that human beings share the desire for the soundness of their parts with other animals. Still, his conclusion is here not absolute, as he claims this other desire *might* (*ʿasā*) be human (*insāniyya*).[66] He emphasizes throughout the rest of the text the importance of discerning the proper human activity, and in fact, to some extent, the rest of the text is an attempt to work out an answer to this question. While I will not go through the entire work, al-Fārābī concludes at the very end of the text that "it is necessary to investigate … the intelligibles that cannot be utilized for the soundness of human bodies and … the senses," as well as that "understanding of the causes of the visible things, which the soul desired, is more human than that knowledge that was construed to be necessary."[67] Thus, a basic feature of al-Fārābī's methodology throughout the text is to highlight the progressive moves to uncover human nature in Aristotle's texts. On the one hand, human beings are marked by will (*irāda*) and choice (*iḫtiyār*); on the other, they have a natural desire for knowledge outside the realm of practical reason. Ultimately, the human will that operates within the realm of practical reason is subordinate to the causal understanding the human soul desires in its most human function. This subordination is the same that we saw already in al-Fārābī's discussion of striving in *On the Perfect State*, where both striving and the apprehending powers are subordinate to theoretical reason. Since in *DA* III all desire is associated with voluntary action and motion, one might worry that theoretical desire, which is the desire that is *most* human and does not per se involve motion, needs to be accounted for in another way. I take it that al-Fārābī reveals his awareness of this potential disconnect between the powers theory and the implicit claims about natural human desire by here discussing human desire for the knowledge of causes outside of the framework of the *DA*. This move would be in contrast to the passages raised above in which al-Fārābī does extend the *DA* framework to theoretical desire, a different approach perhaps due to the fact that here he is explaining Aristotle's thought and not his own.

There are two remaining details from the *Phil. of Aristotle* I would like to highlight before moving on to some general remarks. The first is al-Fārābī's description the desire for knowledge as being by nature (*bi-l-ṭabʿ*) and innate

65 Al-Fārābī, *Falsafat Arisṭūṭālīs*, 65; al-Fārābī, *Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, 76–77.
66 Al-Fārābī, *Falsafat Arisṭūṭālīs*, 65–66; al-Fārābī, *Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, 77.
67 Al-Fārābī, *Falsafat Arisṭūṭālīs*, 132; al-Fārābī, *Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, 130.

(*bi-fiṭra*).[68] Wirmer examines this notion of an innate desire for knowledge shared between al-Fārābī, Ibn Bāǧǧa, and Ibn Ṭufayl, clarifying its centrality to this Aristotelian discourse, and I do not wish to replicate those conclusions here. I will briefly discuss the relation of desire as innate to the desire models in the next section. The second is al-Fārābī's claim that what is innate or by nature occurs prior in time to will and choice.[69] Ibn Bāǧǧa uses both qualifications to describe the desire for demonstration that is the properly human desire and activity. A striking feature of what we have read from the *Phil. Of Aristotle*, particularly in al-Fārābī's remarks on the human desire for knowledge being by nature, is its apparent similarity to Aristotle's claim at the beginning of *Met*. A that all human beings by nature desire to know (πάντες ἄνθρωποι τοῦ εἰδέναι ὀρέγονται φύσει).[70] I raised this Aristotelian claim in the Introduction as an example of Aristotle potentially touting an inherent model of desire, in contrast to a more explicit non-inherent model of the *DA*. However, I want to point out that given what we know of the transmission of Aristotle's *Met*. into Arabic, it is nearly impossible that al-Fārābī should have this exact passage in mind. As Amos Bertolacci has convincingly argued, al-Fārābī in particular was unacquainted with *Met*. A. The translation of the *Met*. available to him (that of Uṣṭāṯ) did not include Book A, with this point being further confirmed by the fact that al-Fārābī does not discuss Book A in his own overview of the *Met*.[71] Thus, any access he had to this mantra would have been indirect.

Nevertheless, we find scattered throughout Aristotle's corpus evidence of this commitment sufficient to lead one to the same conclusion. In the end, al-Fārābī develops this concept by combining claims from logical works about seeking knowledge with claims from the *EN* regarding human desire for the good and regarding the purpose of knowledge *and* action being out of desire for the good. I will here offer an overview of these Aristotelian claims as I see al-Fārābī using them, and then consider the way in which a claim that someone desires something *by nature* correlates to the models of desire I am using, specifically, in what way this affects al-Fārābī's own account of human desire.

First, let us look at al-Fārābī's claim that human beings desire "to understand the causes of sensible things [and] of what is observed in the heaven and on earth." Throughout the *APo*., we find explications of the logical discussions in terms of natural phenomena, all of which must be kept in conversation with Aristotle's claim in *APo*. I.2 that we believe we know (γινώσκειν/*naʿrifu*)

68 Al-Fārābī, *Falsafat Arisṭūṭālīs*, 65; al-Fārābī, *Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, 77.

69 Al-Fārābī, *Falsafat Arisṭūṭālīs*, 70; al-Fārābī, *Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, 80.

70 *Met*. 980a21.

71 Bertolacci, "On the Arabic Translations," 246.

something when we know its cause (αἰτία/*ʿilla*).[72] Aristotle explicitly discusses the role of sensation in understanding in *APo*. I.31, specifically regarding the observation of the eclipse, after which (and into and throughout *APo*. II) he continues his discussion of demonstration and the middle term in relation to the eclipse. Another important point from the *APo*. for al-Fārābī and Ibn Bāǧǧa is the discussion of αἰτίαι at the beginning of II.11. There, at 94a20–24, Aristotle famously highlights the importance of the middle term with respect to causes.

> Since we think we understand when we know the cause (αἰτία), and there are four types of cause (one, what it is to be a thing; one, that if certain things hold it is necessary that this does; another, what initiated the change; and fourth, the aim), all these are proved through the middle term.[73]

Although the four explanations or causes listed at II.11 are not exactly the four causes known from the *Phys*., the fact that they are followed in II.12 by the example of the eclipse has made it easy for interpreters to connect this passage with the four causes familiar from natural science. Further, in *Phys*. II.3, Aristotle claims that we think we know something when we know its cause, specifically the why (τὸ διὰ τί). These two lists of causes were identified in the commentary tradition, and we see, for example, in the commentary on *APo*. attributed to pseudo-Philoponus, an explanation of *APo*. II.11, 94a20–24 that immediately explicates the four causes of the logical discussion in terms of the four causes from the *Phys*.[74] We find this tendency in al-Fārābī as well, who, in his remarks on demonstrations and causes following upon *APo*. II.11, employs similar terminology as in his description of the desire to know the causes of sensible things in the *Phil. Of Aristotle*. For example, in his remarks on demonstration and the causes, he claims that after knowing that something exists, it remains for us to understand its causes, *al-wuqūf ʿalā asbābhā*.[75] He continues, using human mortality as an example to explicate these causes by listing many different explanations for human death, concluding, "The first answer is taken from its matter, the second from its form, the third from its end, and the fourth

72 *APo*. I.2, 71b9–12. Cf. *APo*. I.13, where we read of the twinkling of the stars and the spherical shape of the moon, and where star-gazing and optics are used as general examples.

73 *APo*. II.11, 94a20–24. Translation from Barnes, modified.

74 Goldin, *Philoponus(?)*, 66.

75 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Burhān*, 42. On al-Fārābī's choice of terminology, see Wirmer, "Das natürliche Begehren," 224.

from its agent."[76] Here al-Fārābī has clearly combined the fourfold causal structure from the *Phys*. with the four causes Aristotle lists in *APo*. II.11. One finds this integration of the causes of the *Phys*. into logic later in Ibn Bāǧǧa, both in his logical remarks and throughout his corpus, for example, near the outset of his *Kitāb al-ḥayawān*.[77] The connection of logical inquiry and demonstration to natural phenomena is, of course, further consolidated by reference to the first few chapters of Book I of the *Phys*., and primarily to Aristotle's discussion of the role of first principles and universals in scientific inquiry.

Throughout his logical works, Aristotle describes human beings as *seeking* knowledge or understanding, not desiring it. But one might adduce passages from the *EN* to explain al-Fārābī's discussion of natural human desire relating to logic in *Phil. of Aristotle*. For starters, in I.4 Aristotle reminds us of the *EN*'s opening lines that all things desire some good, claiming, "All knowledge and every rational choice desire some good" (πᾶσα γνῶσις καὶ προαίρεσις ἀγαθοῦ τινὸς ὀρέγεται/*kāna kullu maʿrifati wa-kullu iḫtiyāri inna-mā yatašawwaqu ḫayran mā*).[78] Further, in passages like X.7, 1177b16 ff. Aristotle offers the definition of complete happiness, where we read, "The activity of intellect is believed to be distinguished in seriousness, since it employs contemplation (*raʾy*), and does not desire (*lā taštahī*) to have any other end at all except itself."[79] This talk of aiming or desiring (ἐφίεσθαι/*taštahī*) is an echo of the very first line of the text, where it is again said that all things desire (ἐφίεσθαι/*yatašawwaqu*) the good. Here in X.7, the emphasis is on contemplation itself as the good that is being desired, insofar as it is constitutive of complete happiness—the ultimate good that human beings desire. This ethical discussion of goodness is easily traced back to the psychological characterization of desire from *DA* III.10, where Aristotle explains that "in any case it is the object of appetite which originates movement, this object may be the real or the apparent good."[80]

Even though Aristotle does not commit a single discussion to intellect's desire of the good per se, it is clear that desire of the good encompasses intellect and its functions on multiple levels. Desire functions as the principle of art, inquiry, action, and choice; it drives knowledge acquisition; and it is fundamental to the activity of contemplation, the activity desired for its own sake. The distinction between practical intellect and theoretical intellect has recurred

76 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Burhān*, 42. Cf. also pp. 26–27.

77 See Ibn Bāǧǧa *Kitāb al-ḥayawān*, 81. On the logical remarks, see below.

78 Aristotle, *The Arabic Version of the* Nicomachean Ethics, 118.

79 Aristotle, *The Arabic Version of the* Nicomachean Ethics, 560.

80 *DA* 433b27–28. Pearson discusses the object of ὄρεξις at length in ch. 4 of his *Aristotle on Desire*.

in this section, and we know from al-Fārābī's *Epistle on Intellect* that he distinguishes the practical intellect of *EN* VI from the theoretical intellect of the *APo*. In fact, in that text in his description of the inference of universals in the *APo*., al-Fārābī explicitly highlights that their apprehension is not by syllogism (*qiyās*) or reasoning (*fikr*), but by natural disposition (*bi-l-fiṭra*) and nature (*al-ṭabʿ*), echoed in Aphorism 34 of his *Selected Aphorisms* and reminiscent of his claims about human desire in *Phil. of Aristotle*.[81] Further, in Aphorism 99, he claims that, "The pursuit for truth is in the soul by nature."[82] We find something similar in *On the Perfect State* as well. There, in the overview of human reason, he claims that once intelligibles exist in human beings,

> Careful examination, deliberation, practical thought and a desire (*tašawwuq*) to find out things arise in [the human being] by nature, and a striving (*nuzūʿ*) toward some of what [the human being] thinks in the first instance and a desire for them and [an inclination] toward some of what [the human being] finds out.[83]

Thus, al-Fārābī in places claims that there is natural, human desire for knowledge in both practical and theoretical realms, in addition to his claims about the role of desiring and innateness as according to Aristotle, again regarding both practical and theoretical intellect. Of course, the central role afforded the notion of innate desire to intellect was associated with Aristotle outside of and before al-Fārābī. In fact, in the prologue to the *ThA*, we read twice of innate desire, once articulated as a "natural striving" (*al-nuzūʿ al-ṭabīʿī*) that characterizes intellectual souls, and again as the "natural, primordial desire" (*al-šawq al-ṭabīʿī al-sarmadī*) that drives all agents to action.[84]

One final thing I would like to highlight about the *Phil. of Aristotle* concerns the structure of the text. It is remarkable that this general overview of Aristotle's philosophy is framed in terms of human desire. The text itself starts with human desires of two sorts, practical and theoretical, and then both begins and concludes an investigation into human nature and science as a way of filling out and developing what al-Fārābī determines is the ultimate *human* desire. At the very end of the text, al-Fārābī finally confirms what he had earlier left undetermined. It is indeed, he claims, necessary to investigate the theoretical

81 Al-Fārābī, *Risāla fī-l-ʿaql*, 8; *On the Intellect*, 70. Al-Fārābī, *Fuṣūl muntaziʿa*, 51–52; al-Fārābī, *Selected Aphorisms*, 29.

82 Al-Fārābī, *Fuṣūl muntaziʿa*, 101; al-Fārābī, *Selected Aphorisms*, 67.

83 Al-Fārābī, *Mabādiʾ*, 204–205.

84 *ThA* "Prooemium theologiae," Henry–Schwyzer 486, Badawī 4.

questions whose answers the human soul desires, referring back to the potentially overreaching desires with which he began the investigation of Aristotle's philosophy, those desires he had claimed might be human. As a result, he brings the whole text—all of Aristotelian science—back to the desire he discussed at the beginning. The effect of this framing is that the entirety of the text is, to some extent, an explanation of the desires with which al-Fārābī starts the book that he identified as the starting point of Aristotelian science. Since human beings desire to know, that is, since they undertake the various sciences, the explanation of the sciences that forms the bulk of the text is an enumeration of what fulfills true human desire. Wirmer highlights this basic function of natural desire in al-Fārābī's analysis, concluding that this desire makes scientific knowledge possible for human beings by being part of their own perfection, which in turn connects human perfection to scientific method.[85]

A final point that emphasizes desire's importance is the contrast between al-Fārābī's *Philosophy of Plato* as opposed to his *Phil. of Aristotle*. Interestingly, although in modern scholarship desire's role in philosophy is more frequently highlighted in Plato's thought than in Aristotle's, early on in Philosophy of the Islamic world, desire was clearly recognized as a crucial part of *Aristotle's* philosophy. Although this assessment is based primarily on al-Fārābī's appraisal, he is a good place to go if one is looking a spokesperson for early Islamic Aristotelianism. Even further, we saw in chapter 2 that desire played an important role in the *ThA*, so that even though the text is misattributed, it surely encouraged further association of desire with Aristotle's thought owing to that attribution. That all of this early work on desire in Aristotle's thought was done without the first book of the *Met*. and without (ever) the *MA* is even more striking.

## 4 Models of Desire in Aristotle and al-Fārābī

Now that we have looked at both Aristotle and al-Fārābī on desire, I want to summarize what I take us to have found as it pertains to the models of desire with which I am working. Specifically, I would like to connect the above conclusions regarding al-Fārābī's remarks on desire to desire as modeled within the human being. To do so, I need still to address the fact that desire is said to be *by nature*, insofar as that formulation might sound necessarily inherent and therefore potentially undermining of my preliminary characterization of this desire as non-inherent. That is, when one says that a desire is by nature, an

85 Wirmer, "Das natürliche Begehren," 221.

obvious understanding would be that something with the nature in question always automatically desires a certain type of thing, e.g. a human being is inherently always desiring to know, and thus is not in need of a prompt for this desire to occur. However, given what we have seen of the non-inherent model, desire that is by nature may be also taken in a non-inherent way, as desire that is determined *by the nature of the subject that determines what is valuable*—the subject being the one evaluating or determining what is worth desiring in the first place. On this understanding, a human being, when undertaking the properly human activity, will value knowledge and in turn desire to know. As we have seen throughout the study so far, one can understand Aristotle's account of desire from the *DA* as working explicitly on a non-inherent model, and above I argued that the same holds for al-Fārābī as well. If we take into account conclusions regarding Aristotle's conception of desire from Giles Pearson's comprehensive study, we have further reason for concluding that Aristotle's basic conception of desire is one that hews to a non-inherent model. The Arabic translations with which most of our authors worked present desire in various ways, and thus for those texts the question remains open. After examining Aristotle's appraisals of the apparent good, Pearson concludes that, "In order for some person or animal to desire something, they must see, construe or conceive that thing as valuable in some respect or other."[86] This remark concludes an extensive examination in which Pearson argues that Aristotle understands objects of desire to be grasped first by a power separate from the desiderative one, and that this object further must be evaluated to constitute some good.[87] This conclusion generally corresponds to the conclusion drawn by Moss that I examined in the Introduction. Although, as I highlighted there and above, this position is not universally accepted as Aristotle's own, to my mind it makes good sense of his power psychology together with his emphasis on the importance of practical reason to judge the good correctly so that we may desire the actual good. As I highlighted in the Introduction, desire on an inherent model always bypasses this evaluative aspect—there is a basic connection already granted between the desiring power and the object, as in the Platonic case of the spirited part of the soul and the inherent desire it has for honor. Even without perhaps the ambivalent Aristotelean claim from the first lines of *Met*. A, Aristotle's remarks about desire in non-psychological works and the fact of his being a successor to Plato gave interpreters the opportunity to offer readings of Aristotle on desire using inherent models. In the first chapter, we saw Plotinus

86 Pearson, *Aristotle on Desire*, 87.

87 Pearson, *Aristotle on Desire*, 63–74.

offer just such a construal, and it is worth asking to what extent al-Fārābī does so as well, specifically with the notion of desire by nature. Although al-Fārābī's discussion of desire within the celestial intellects and the First Cause would seem to incorporate an inherent desire into his universal framework, regarding *human* desire, I take al-Fārābī to adhere consistently to a non-inherent model.

In the examination of and following upon al-Fārābī's *Phil. of Aristotle*, we found Aristotelian descriptions of the search for knowledge could easily be used to substantiate claims about desire itself, especially with the interpolation of the notion that some desire is by nature. We saw al-Fārābī incorporating, and to some extent struggling with, this apparently distinct sort of desire that is implicit in Aristotle's texts, and we read of desire by nature not only in the *Phil. of Aristotle*, but in al-Fārābī's own *Aphorisms*. However, al-Fārābī's clear indebtedness to a non-inherent model in his account of human desire in *On the Perfect State* and *Political Regime* gives us reason to pause. Indeed, there are indications that he uses the 'by nature' qualifier in the same way Aristotle does. On some points, al-Fārābī takes one's internal disposition or *fiṭra* to be individually differentiated, e.g. in the case of prophets.[88] But the claim under consideration is, in the *Selected Aphorisms*, a general claim about the soul ("the pursuit for truth is in the soul by nature"). It occurs in a subdiscussion of friendship, which itself begins with the claim that "the aim intended (*al-ġaraḍ al-maqṣūd*) in *everything* is truth and, likewise, good and virtue."[89] This discussion clearly has in the background Aristotle's discussion of friendship of virtue from the *EN*, and indeed above I highlighted the use of *q-ṣ-d* in translating claims about the desire for the good at the root of science and knowledge. The point of these remarks is to highlight the fact that virtuous friends will agree on matters related to the truth because they share it as a goal. As was made clear in al-Fārābī's political works, the realization of desire of the human goal requires an apprehending power plus the striving power. In the human being, the apprehending powers were all organized beneath theoretical reason, subordinated to its assessment. Since al-Fārābī relies so heavily upon a non-inherent model in his psychological account of desire, and since the claim that human beings have desire by nature neither in itself requires an inherent desire nor is explicated in terms of inherent desire by al-Fārābī, I do not think we have a strong reason to understand his use of desire by nature as inherent. Instead, we can understand this desire as non-inherent, as I also argued in the case of Aristo-

88 The notion of innateness in al-Fārābī is complicated and understudied, and here is hardly the place to undertake an explication of this multifaceted notion. Thus, while I try to offer a plausible account, my remarks here are necessarily preliminary.

89 Al-Fārābī, *Fuṣūl muntazi'a*, 101; al-Fārābī, *Selected Aphorisms*, 67, emphasis mine.

tle. Insofar as human beings realize the properly human activity, they desire to know because thought itself is directed in its activity toward truth and in turn deems it valuable. Thus, I take it that al-Fārābī maintains a non-inherent account of human desire even in his claims that human beings desire the truth by nature.

Above I concluded that al-Fārābī's inclusion of the desire of the celestial intellects marks a point of departure from the non-inherent model he took over from Aristotle's *DA*. I did not there consider the extent to which this desire constitutes an integration of an inherent model of desire into al-Fārābī's system. Having looked at desire that is by nature and the way it works with these models, I think we can examine the question with more perspective. There are two basic features of celestial desire as al-Fārābī discussed it that are germane to this question. The first is that the lover and the loved were one and the same in the case of the first cause. The second is that this love is permanent. There is the additional qualification of the first cause as being the *first* object of love and passionate desire for all of the celestial intellects, but ultimately I do not think al-Fārābī gives us enough information there to discern what he thinks about those intellects. Nevertheless, we have more clarity in the case of the first cause. There, the fact that the subject and object of love are one and the same, *bi-ʿaynihī*, is enough to put, by definition, an inherent desire at the heart of al-Fārābī's system. Insofar as this instance of desiring is inherent, it is permanent; insofar as the subject of desiring is the first cause, or God, who is self-desiring, this subject of inherent desire always gets what it wants.

One might account for this combination of inherent and non-inherent desires with recourse to a distinction that Miriam Galston makes between *On the Perfect State* and the *Political Regime*. Although her distinction concerns these two texts in particular, I think it highlights a basic tension in al-Fārābī's thought that might account for the distinction between human and divine desire, as well as the difference between his claim in *On the Perfect State* that celestial intellects passionately desire the first cause and his claim in the *Political Regime* that the intellects do not strive for anything. Galston highlights that because of al-Fārābī's emphasis on the first cause in *On the Perfect State* as "the source of all being, corporeal and incorporeal[, …] it represents both nature and reason in the universe, that is, physical as well as transcendent existence."[90] This emphasis, she argues, should be considered with reference to that of the *Political Regime*, where the emphasis lies in agent intellect's role in actualizing intellect, as a result of which, "Agent intellect thus stands for the move-

90 Galston, *Politics and Excellence*, 215–216.

ment away from nature towards reason, whereas the first cause represents both nature and reason."[91] The basic connection of the entire world to the first cause in *On the Perfect State* has the effect that desire becomes fundamental and inherent to the world in a way that is not found in the *Political Regime*. Further, the nature-reason distinction that Galston draws makes clear that at least on one account from the *Political Regime*, al-Fārābī seems to dissociate reason and desire.

From this investigation, we have seen the way in which the basic non-inherent model of desire was transmitted into Arabic from translations of Aristotle's works. Further, we saw the clear way in which it was taken up by perhaps the earliest of Aristotle's primary advocates. But even in the work of al-Fārābī, we see the traces of Plotinian and general Neoplatonic thought that had blended with Aristotle's name manifest. Given the general presence of inherent possibilities within Aristotle's work, it was possible for al-Fārābī to introduce and blend an inherent model of desire into aspects of his thought, but not, as was just made clear, without some contradiction elsewhere. Moving forward, we will see that Ibn Bāǧǧa fails to retain any of the inherent aspects that we have determined, and instead hews closely and consistently to a non-inherent model alone. Further, it will be clear that Ibn Ṭufayl's use of power psychology to articulate his inherent account of desire is indebted to the non-inherent model shared by Aristotle, al-Fārābī, and Ibn Bāǧǧa. But before turning to that account, let us now finally turn to al-Andalus and examine Ibn Bāǧǧa's own explanation of desire on the non-inherent model, where we find him negotiating between Aristotle and al-Fārābī to set the terms of his model.

91 Galston, *Politics and Excellence*, 216. Galston goes on in the following pages to convincingly highlight the implications of this distinction in the discussions of natural philosophy in each of the texts.

CHAPTER 4

# Ibn Bāǧǧa on Desire and Conceptualization

In the western end of the Islamic world, we find in 6th/12th century al-Andalus Zaragozan Ibn Bāǧǧa. His life was spent in the service of the Almoravids, both in their height and during the beginning of their decline under pressure from their rivals the Almohads.[1] From the 11th to the early 12th century, Zaragoza was a city of learning, and in this environment Ibn Bāǧǧa lived and worked.[2] He was well liked by at least one Zaragozan governor, Ibn Tīfilwīt, although he was forced by various factors to flee the city, which he must have done by the Christian conquest of the city in 512/1118.[3] Although Zaragoza was a city of learning, the position of philosophy in the city was nevertheless tenuous. In fact, philosophy, while widely practiced, was practiced mostly privately, since not all aspects of philosophy—or schools of philosophy—were entirely welcome. For example, the Cordoban Ibn Masarra was a Neoplatonist thinker whose 10th century followers were heavily persecuted. This persecution stemmed likely from concern of the Andalusī Umayyad Caliphate for potential Fāṭimid sympathies, since Ibn Masarra's work and Fāṭimid doctrine shared basics elements, such as an esoteric Platonizing, which (at least for the Fāṭimids) had juridical and theological implications.[4] Nevertheless, Neoplatonism was not lost in al-Andalus. Zaragoza was home to many Jewish philosophers, such as formerly mentioned Ibn Gabirol, who, perhaps in virtue of his outsider status, managed to undertake explicitly philosophical and Neoplatonic composition without suffering the same fate as the Masarrīs.[5] As a result, Ibn Bāǧǧa would have been generally familiar with Neoplatonic trends and ideas, and some Neoplatonic motifs are (at least cosmetically) evident in his work. Regardless, Ibn Bāǧǧa concerned himself with Aristotelianism. Even though the Aristotelian curriculum was practiced and studied in al-Andalus before Ibn Bāǧǧa, he himself was the first Andalusī Muslim to undertake a clear and explicit Aristotelian philosoph-

1 For an overview of the sources on Ibn Bāǧǧa's life, see Puig Montada, "Annex 1: Sources for his Biography" found at "Ibn Bâjja [Avempace]." For a general overview of Ibn Bāǧǧa's life, see Forcada, "Ibn Bājja and the Classification of the Sciences in al-Andalus"; and Wirmer, *Vom Denken der Natur*, 7–17.

2 Stroumsa, *Andalus and Sefarad*, 125–128.

3 Puig Montada, "Ibn Bâjja [Avempace]."

4 Stroumsa, *Andalus and Sefarad*, 57–60. On Ibn Masarra's life and work, see Stroumsa, *Andalus and Sefarad*, 34–57. See also Akhtar, *Philosophers, Sufis, and Caliphs*, 77–83.

5 Stroumsa, *Andalus and Sefarad*, 111–114.

ical program that extended beyond logic.[6] Indeed, Ibn Bāǧǧa instigated the Andalusī commentary tradition that was later so completely embraced by Averroes, inspired by the influential commentaries of Alexander of Aphrodisias and Themistius to which he was himself indebted.[7] In spite of the pivotal role Ibn Bāǧǧa's thought would play in the history of Aristotelianism in al-Andalus, he had many enemies, and died under suspicious circumstances in 533/1138, purportedly poisoned by a rival with an eggplant.[8]

The scientific spirit of Ibn Bāǧǧa was decidedly rationalist, and his philosophical reflections are heavily inspired both by logic and by mathematics, which, as Ibn Ṭufayl will later corroborate, was characteristic of the scientific climate of the time. While Ibn Bāǧǧa's reputation for rationalism is certainly true, he was also assuredly concerned with accounting for the human impulse toward knowledge. He does so by situating the human being within a framework of final causality according to which conceptualization and affirmation regulate the human desire for understanding. To this end, Ibn Bāǧǧa discusses desire somewhat continuously in his texts. In the previous chapters, I have presented two models of understanding desire, inherent and non-inherent. Specifically, desire is either part of the very being of the desiring subject as its essential activity, and therefore a permanent feature, or it is compounded as a discrete desire of the desiring subject as a conditional desire, for example the desire for an avocado generated by the imaginative and the desiring powers (although non-inherent desires will be expressions of an intrinsic desiring capacity, for example a universal desiring power, as in one version of Aristotle's account). In this chapter, we will find an account of desire similar to that put forward by al-Fārābī in his account of the striving power. The account Ibn Bāǧǧa develops is more explicit concerning theoretical desire and the relation of desire and ultimate human perfection.

Although Ibn Bāǧǧa and Ibn Ṭufayl share some philosophical influences, as will be made clear below and in the following chapter, two foundational thinkers stood between them. Ibn Ṭufayl was profoundly influenced by Avicenna and al-Ġazālī, and Ibn Bāǧǧa was not. But it is perhaps misleading to say that Ibn Bāǧǧa was not influenced by al-Ġazālī. For one should say that Ibn Bāǧǧa was indeed influenced by al-Ġazālī, if one counts the lengths Ibn Bāǧǧa goes to in order to criticize and to reject al-Ġazālī's positions. His apparent ignorance or ambivalence to Avicenna is clear, as he, to my knowledge, never once

6 Stroumsa, *Andalus and Sefarad*, 104–110, especially her remark on 110, "The position of a philosopher was always delicate," and Wirmer, *Vom Denken der Natur*, 61–85, respectively.

7 Stroumsa, *Andalus and Sefarad*, 127.

8 As reported by Al-Maqqari. See Puig Montada, "Ibn Bâjja [Avempace]."

mentions Avicenna. In fact, in her discussion of the 12th century intellectual environment of al-Andalus, Sarah Stroumsa highlights the general distaste for Avicenna in the Maghrib during this time, relating an anecdote according to which the renowned physician Abū' l-'Alā' Ibn Zuhr used a copy of Avicenna's encyclopedia of medicine as draft paper.[9] Thus, Ibn Bāǧǧa's thought represents a thoroughgoing Aristotelianism in the sense that we now know it: his thought does not contain Neoplatonic elements such as the return or emanation, and he seems not only uninfluenced by the pseudo-Aristotelian *ThA*, but also to have rejected aspects of al-Fārābī's thought that were ultimately Neoplatonic. As a result, Ibn Bāǧǧa primarily discusses the desire of the human being in terms of the psychology found in the *DA*, divesting the specific Aristotelian philosophical discourse of al-Andalus of any Neoplatonic, and specifically Plotinian, contribution to the discussion of desire.

In the following, I will examine the connection between desire and reason within Ibn Bāǧǧa's thought and particularly the way in which they relate to human perfection, as he conceived of it. I will argue that Ibn Bāǧǧa follows al-Fārābī in making desire distinct from and subordinate to reason, insofar as the striving soul needs an object for an instance of desire. Myself following Wirmer, I will argue that Ibn Bāǧǧa marks the completion of a process of incorporating desire completely into human theoretical intellection. Nevertheless, desire remains distinct from the human essence while serving to realize that essence, with the effect that desire ceases upon human perfection. The perfection of the human essence in general prioritizes theoretical reasoning, and even moral virtues work to subordinate the body complete to intellection, even in its own demise. In the end, we find that desire works on a non-inherent model in which one has desire plus a concept, to such an extent that this framework is repeated in layers from reason itself all the way to the innate heat of the body.

## 1 Desire in the Soul

When reading either the more popular texts by Ibn Bāǧǧa or the secondary scholarship on his work, it might be easy to get the impression that Ibn Bāǧǧa does not care much for desire as a philosophical tool. David Wirmer alone has consistently focused on the role of desire in Ibn Bāǧǧa's thought, especially highlighting Ibn Bāǧǧa's position in a philosophical trend that emphasizes nat-

9 Stroumsa, *Andalus and Sefarad*, 155.

ural desire of human beings, as we saw in the previous chapter in the thought of al-Fārābī (more on this below).[10] The paucity of studies on desire in Ibn Bāǧǧa may, in part, be due to the texts primarily studied. It is thematized neither in his *Governance of the Solitary* (*Tadbīr al-mutawaḥḥid*), nor in his famous *Conjunction of the Intellect with the Human Being* (*Ittiṣāl al-ʿaql bi-l-insān*), although we find discussion of desire in both. As has been often lamented, the section on the rational power of the soul of Ibn Bāǧǧa's own *Book on the Soul* (*Kitāb al-nafs*) did not survive. However, owing to the (re)discovery of the Berlin/Krakow manuscript, additional material was able to be added to this still incomplete section, and some of that material contained at least mention of desire.[11] Nevertheless, for any extensive discussion of desire in the soul, we must look to other discussions of striving and desire. Fortunately, we find ample, if not totally systematic, discussion of desire elsewhere throughout his corpus. As Wirmer has also shown, shorter, lesser known texts contain rich material for understanding Ibn Bāǧǧa's motion of desire. Ibn Bāǧǧa discusses desire primarily in terms of the striving soul, *al-nafs al-nuzūʿiyya*, or the striving power, *al-quwwa al-nuzūʿiyya*, terminology familiar to us from al-Fārābī's discussions. According to Ibn Bāǧǧa, from this striving power springs desire, *šawq*. In this section, I will consider the notion of desire in the soul, in particular in the rational and imaginative powers of the soul, in order to determine in what way desire functions and what its relation to other powers of the soul is. My goal is to show that desire functions as a corollary to many other psychological powers, such that Ibn Bāǧǧa's system is fundamentally structured around the notion of final causality, leaving it layered with different types and manifestations of desire. This structure of desire reflects the basic role of natural science within his system, psychology being the highest part of natural philosophy, as argued by Wirmer.[12] This discussion aims to set up the following section, where I will highlight that Ibn Bāǧǧa explicitly claims that even the most human desire—rational desire—is nevertheless not *essential* to the human being. There I will argue that this particular conception of desire and its placement within the structure of the human soul offers a clear instance of the non-inherent model of desire. So, although human beings must desire to achieve their goals, these desires ought to stop, and they are always located outside of Ibn Bāǧǧa's definition of what it is to be truly human.

10 As I discussed in the previous chapter, Wirmer, "Das natürliche Begehren."

11 See Puig Montada, "Ibn Bâjja [Avempace]."

12 See Wirmer, *Vom Denken der Natur*, 138–145, and the conclusion on 144: "Die Wissenschaft von der Seele ist ein Teil der Naturwissenschaft, und zwar ist sie, weil die Seele das Prinzip der komplexesten natürlichen Körper darstellt, der höchste Teil der Naturwissenschaft."

I will begin by concentrating on short treatises that address desire, in an effort first, to show the way in which Ibn Bāǧǧa views desire's role within psychological activity, second, to determine his vocabulary, and last, to determine his philosophical influences on this point. In this section, I will focus on two treatises: *On the Inquiry into the Striving Soul* (*Fī l-baḥṯ ʿan al-nafs al-nuzūʿiyya*)[13] and the *On the Human Goal* (*Fī l-ġāya al-insāniyya*). In these texts we find borne out the above claim that Ibn Bāǧǧa's main discussions of desire are set in terms of the striving soul and its corresponding activity, desire. *On the Inquiry into the Striving Soul* spends most of its time discussing motion, although it begins by explaining the different types of striving.

> The striving soul (*al-nafs al-nuzūʿiyya*) is a genus for three powers, namely, the striving in the imagination (*bi-l-taḫayyul*), by which is the rearing of children and initiative to build domiciles, and friendship and love, and the like. And [there is] the striving soul in the intermediary soul (*bi-l-nafs al-mutawassiṭa*), and by it [one] desires (*yaštāqu*) nourishment and cover, and all of the arts (*al-ṣanāʾiʿ*) fall under this [category]. These two are common to animals. Another of them is the striving that is perceived in reason (*bi-l-nuṭq*), by which learning and teaching are, and by this is the human being alone distinguished.[14]

Ibn Bāǧǧa goes on to explain that the striving had by all animals, the first two, are ordered such that the presence of that by the intermediary soul is by nature prior to that by the imagination. The human being has the third kind of striving in addition to and after these two. Thus, the striving powers are of two kinds, one animal and one human, with the added proviso that here he has added a third instantiation within the animal kind, namely, that of the intermediary soul. Notably, arts are said to belong to the sphere of animal striving, which suggests that Ibn Bāǧǧa sees activities such as nest-building to be proper arts in some sense. After these sentences, he leaves the topic of desire, and moves on to discuss motion at length. The situation of Ibn Bāǧǧa's discussions of desire within or leading up to discussions of motion already reveals his dependence on al-Fārābī and Aristotle's *DA*. We see the Aristotelian classification of desire in this threefold division, with the striving that is by the intermediary soul might correspond to the Aristotelian conception of appetite, since he claims that the striving by this power is more basic than that by imagination. Elsewhere Ibn

13 As found in *Rasāʾil falsafiyya*. I have consulted the Berlin/Krakow manuscript only in select cases. All translations from *Rasāʾil falsafiyya* are my own.

14 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Fī l-baḥṯ ʿan al-nafs l-nuzūʿiyya*, in *Rasāʾil falsafiyya*, 108.

Bāǧǧa uses the term *mutawassiṭa* to refer to the means by which the pneuma moves the body, and the rest of the treatise is about motion (including discussion of heat).[15] With these considerations, this term makes sense as the complement to reason and imagination if here Ibn Bāǧǧa is referring to the part of the soul that is closest to the body, such that nourishment and clothes would fall under its desires.[16]

This division of the striving soul (or power, *quwwa*—Ibn Bāǧǧa uses these terms interchangeably) thus offers the following structure: the striving power is a genus to different species of desire, each manifested through or by a different "soul" or power of the soul. These species are the desiring of intermediary soul, imagination, and reason, all activities made possible by the combination of the striving soul with the respective additional power. This account offers a clear understanding of desire along a non-inherent model, insofar as the instances of desire are being worked out and indeed generated not at the level of the desiring power itself, but at a second level and as part of another power of the soul. This account is slightly different from al-Fārābī's, since Ibn Bāǧǧa here claims that desire is *in* the other powers, even though the striving soul ultimately accounts for the desire. (We will see this reiterated below.) Insofar as the striving power is a power distinct from reason or imagination, Ibn Bāǧǧa's account is different than the presentation of desire in the (probably) Isḥāq translation of the *DA*, especially as it was interpreted by Averroes. Further, we found in these short remarks what I will show to be hallmarks of Ibn Bāǧǧa's terminology of desire, which I will continue to explore throughout most of this chapter. The two most important terms for our discussion are striving (*nuzūʿ*), here qualifying a power of soul, and desire (*šawq*, here found in the eighth verbal form *yaštāqu*), what the striving soul, together with the correlating power, produces. As I will show below, Ibn Bāǧǧa's characterization of the striving soul found in the above passage correlates to that found elsewhere, and as we have already seen, this terminology is familiar from al-Fārābī, insofar as Ibn Bāǧǧa uses *nuzūʿ* to refer to the power from which desire, *šawq*, originates.[17]

We find these points reiterated and expanded in Ibn Bāǧǧa's discussion in *On the Human Goal*, in which he aims to account for not only the telos of human life, but the process by which it is obtained. In this discussion, he adds the qualification of perpetual, *dāʾim*, to the description of the striving power. He begins

15 See Wirmer, *Vom Denken der Natur*, 495–496.

16 Although this understanding of *mutawassiṭa* admittedly makes it more difficult to understand Ibn Bāǧǧa's claim about the arts in this context.

17 See above pp. 125–127.

his explanation by distinguishing between active and passive powers, the latter of which are "either material or animal," and by asserting that the human being "is greater than that to which it is connected," i.e. the body.[18] His aim here is rather "to reflect on the active human powers." He explicates the active power through the skill of grammar.

> The active power is like the art of grammar, by [this art] is [the completion of] grammar. [The active power] pursues perfection alone, and stops. The repetition of its act is only by the striving soul and by the consideration (*raʾy*). That which is due to the striving soul is like what the agent does desiring (*tašawwuqan*) only to act. And [that which is] by consideration is to act so that another result is obtained, namely, the benefit of that action. So, it is clear that the striving soul desires something perpetual (*dāʾim*), or something insofar as it is perpetual. This desire is called being lively (*našāṭ*), and the privation of this desire is fatigue, exertion, and the like. By this desire is the act that produces the perpetuity from the powers. This desire is purely animal, [and] the human being is not distinguished by it at all.[19]

Acts that stem from desire of the striving power alone are attempts at eternality that in fact characterize being lively or alive, and are pure activity, in the general, non-technical sense. Ibn Bāǧǧa shows us in this example what happens when one acts according to desire alone, and not according to contemplation. He clarifies that, "Whenever a human being acts by this direction," that is, on the basis of this striving alone, acts not insofar as one is human, says Ibn Bāǧǧa, but as "an animal whose imaginations are human."[20] These remarks are crucial, for two reasons. First, Ibn Bāǧǧa has given some definition to striving, as a sort of urging to eternity.[21] Second, he makes clear that imagination by itself can have content that is appropriate to humans but nevertheless fail to be human. This relegation of imagination per se to the realm of the animal is consistent with the passage we saw above, as well as what we read throughout Ibn Bāǧǧa's corpus. In contrast with these acts from imagination, "One who

18 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Fī l-ġāya l-ʾinsāniyya*, 243. Translations of this text are my own, with consultation of the German.

19 Ibn Bāǧǧa, 244.

20 Ibn Bāǧǧa, 244.

21 I avoid calling this striving a drive, as I do not mean to incorporate something like drive theory, bare urges, or instinct.

acts from consideration acts specifically insofar as [one] is a human being."[22] However, this does not mean that all acts of consideration are ends in themselves. Most acts of consideration will be intermediate steps toward the one true human goal, namely, "the intelligibles or one of them."[23] He makes a clearer distinction regarding the relation between the striving power and the power that provides the object of desire in his explication of what intelligibles are. He says, "Consideration and the striving power both desire perpetuity, except that consideration desires it in itself, and the striving desires what resembles it."[24] Ibn Bāǧǧa characterizes the end goal for the human being—that is, reaching these intelligibles—in terms of Aristotle's description of the contemplative goal at the end of the *NE*, saying, "There comes about, just as Aristotle said, tranquility (*sakīna*) in perpetual repose and delight."[25] Later, we will see Ibn Bāǧǧa use just this description to chastise what he sees as a failing of al-Ġazālī to recognize the end of human perfection appropriately.

Within the context of this discussion, the problem with the *imaginative* striving power, by contrast, is that the forms or concepts in the imagination are not in themselves perpetual, but are of an intermediary type of form that fails to attain the level of the perpetual in itself.[26] In a case of properly human, rational desire, "The consideration [that is] correct (*ṣawāb*) essentially and not accidentally desires the perpetual in itself," owing to the fact that, e.g., knowledge is correct insofar as it capture what a thing really is, and knowledge is also the sort of thing that never ceases.[27] Objects of imagination, in addition to being particular objects taken from sense, disappear, being totally dependent on my recollection of them. Not being a universal, the image I have in my imagination will die when I do—it and I are both temporal. At the end of *On the Human Goal*, Ibn Bāǧǧa concludes, "The perpetual is that which time does not comprehend, and is perpetual in itself, not by its perpetual time. Therefore, the most appropriate of the perpetual things with respect to perpetuity (*dawām*) is God exalted, [who] is the giver of perpetuity."[28] Since human desire is capable of attaining what is perpetual in itself, human desire is also the only kind of desire—the only striving soul—that can be fully satiated, since the object of its desire never vanishes and can be attained. Ibn Bāǧǧa has not yet articulated

22 Ibn Bāǧǧa, 245.
23 Ibn Bāǧǧa, 245–246.
24 Ibn Bāǧǧa, 252.
25 Ibn Bāǧǧa, 252.
26 Ibn Bāǧǧa, 246.
27 Ibn Bāǧǧa, 247–248. More on the technical and ethical function of striving below.
28 Ibn Bāǧǧa, 252.

whether desire ceases, but he has now accounted for a necessary condition of desire ceasing: the perpetuity of its object. Coupled with the criterion of perpetuity is that of correctness, which is correlative to an unchanging nature.[29] But more on this point below.

We find consideration of desire in Ibn Bāǧǧa's more general works as well. For example, in the *Epistle of Farewell* (*Risālat al-wadāʿ*), he reiterates the account of desire and psychological powers we have been discussing. There, in a discussion of the self, he explains that imagination is a mover only when accompanied by desire, and that

> The desire sometimes occurs in the imagination and [sometimes] in reason (*fikr*). And the animals without reason have only the desire of the imagination, [which] is the highest of [their] steps. The rational desire (*al-tašawwuq al-fikriyya*) is the desire of the correct, and it is [that which] only the human has as a distinguishing feature.[30]

Here we get largely the same account as we had above. Although the articulation of rational desire highlights that Ibn Bāǧǧa unwaveringly accepts desire within the rational power as such, devoid from a distinction of action. Further, it has already become clear that Ibn Bāǧǧa distinguishes a specific, even narrow, type of desire as human desire properly speaking. We will also find this distinction in Ibn Ṭufayl's account, but this is perhaps the clearest articulation so far in this study of a human desire that is not, for example, an act of willing, but something that in kind aims beyond the material sphere. Perhaps the most interesting feature of this discussion falls in the following lines, which are about what we mean when we say, "*I* strive for something." Ibn Bāǧǧa says, "The first motion that is in us is compounded from imagination and striving, and the striving is signified by the soul, and because of that, I said, 'my soul inclines me'. What the pronoun indicates is another thing."[31] He goes on to specify that "that which was indicated by the pronoun is the rational power." This distinction foreshadows one we will see clearly at the end of the next section, namely, that striving and desire are not part of the human essence. Having offered a general overview of the categories of desire in the soul, and distinguished a uniquely human type of desire, we can now turn to examine what exactly it means to desire something as a human being.

---

29 See *DA* 433a27.

30 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Risālat al-wadāʿ*, 101. All translations of *Risālat al-wadāʿ* and *Tadbīr al-mutawaḥḥid* are my own, with consultation of the French translation.

31 Ibn Bāǧǧa, 101.

## 2 Desire in the Human Being

To answer this question, let us turn to perhaps the most extended and novel discussion about desire in Ibn Bāǧǧa's writing, which occurs in the so-called *On the Essence of Natural Desire* (*Fī mahiyyat al-šawq al-ṭabīʿī*). I say so-called, because this text is also situated within Ibn Bāǧǧa's remarks on al-Fārābī's book on demonstration.[32] This text is unique in that it applies Aristotle's psychology of the *DA* to the process of logical deduction, which works to account for Aristotle's more general remarks about human beings (for example at the end of *Met*. A), and as a way of furthering al-Fārābī's discussion of the *APo*.[33] Unlike in *On the Inquiry into the Striving Power*, Ibn Bāǧǧa spends most of the text determining what natural human desire is and in what way it is satiated. Like much of Ibn Bāǧǧa's writing, the text itself is oblique and difficult to follow, and deserves much more attention than I am able to give it here. It has already been discussed by David Wirmer, who rightly puts the text into dialogue with al-Fārābī's *Phil. of Aristotle*, which I discussed in the previous chapter, and with Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān*, which is the subject of the next two chapters.[34] The general argument of Ibn Bāǧǧa's remarks is that the desire to know, a desire that he considers to be natural or proper to human beings, is fundamentally connected to the intellectual apprehension of each of the four causes. Ibn Bāǧǧa lays out the procedure through which one may learn the various causes of any given object of knowledge—and therefore of any given object of properly human desire. The remarks end with a meditation on the way in which demonstration (*burhān*) satisfies the conditions of knowledge such that our desire ceases. Here he discusses at great length theoretical, *al-naẓariyya*, desire, which belongs to human beings alone and by which they are distinguished from other animals. He begins by explaining that "natural, theoretical desires (*al-tašawwuqāt al-naẓariyya al-ṭabīʿiyya*)" are prior "by nature, just like

32 Here I follow the free-standing text as it has been given by al-ʿAlawī in *Rasāʾil falsafiyya*, 97–102, although it is also found in Fakhry's edition of *Al-mantīq ʿinda al-Fārābī*, 123–127. See also Wirmer, "Das natürliche Begehren," 222. For the conditions of the manuscripts, see al-ʿAlawī *Muʾallafāt Ibni Bāǧǧa*, 43 ff. on the Oxford manuscript, and on the Escorial manuscript 73 ff. See also Forcada, "Ibn Bājja on Taṣawwur and Tasdīq," 123–125.

33 Although the natural reference would presumably be the very beginning *Met*. A, as I discussed in the previous section the transmission of the *Met*. into Arabic was incomplete. *Met*. A was translated only from 987a6. See Averroes, *Tafsīr mā baʿda l-ṭabīʿa*, vol. 1, 160. On the transmission of the *Met*. into Arabic, see again Bertolacci, "On the Arabic Translations," 241–275.

34 Wirmer, "Das natürliche Begehren," 223–224.

the cause precedes the effect."[35] These opening lines set the orientation of the rest of his remarks by establishing that Ibn Bāǧǧa will discuss natural, theoretical desires with respect to causes, i.e. that which guarantees something's subsistence. He continues, explaining that we have a fourfold desire (which corresponds to the four causes), which is generated when we recognize that something has a cause.

> Whenever we grant it, there comes about for us a fourfold desire, namely, why this [thing in question] is, and what exactly is the goal (*qaṣd*) in joining this meaning to this place for the sake of which the mover moves, and what the goal is in this existence, for we have this desire by nature. For that reason, Aristotle counts our saying, "Nature does nothing in vain but acts always for the sake of something," among the first principles.[36]

Ibn Bāǧǧa continues, describing the experience through which an instance of theoretical desire arises, offering a survey of the questions to which we want answers. When one has a concept in one's mind, when it is yet vague and ill-defined, by nature one desires to establish what the thing is and why it is. Here it is difficult to discern what exactly he is talking about without knowing that the discussion ends in a point about desire's connection to demonstration. Indeed, this fact most clearly shows that this treatise was set up on its own after being moved from a different, logic-oriented examination, given that the discussion makes sense only in a discussion of an intellectual, logical activity the entire time. Ibn Bāǧǧa is more explicit concerning the relation between the desire and the causes in the following passage.

> When we contemplate each one of these four [causes], which are the form, the matter, the agent, and the final, each one of these [causes] occupies the place of the thing, and a desire for the investigation into its causes emerges. This [investigation] does not go on infinitely, for we will arrive at the matter which has no matter, and when we stop at matter that has no matter, a desire does not emerge, this desire having ceased and not existing. So therefore, this desire is only for the sake of this cause, and this cause has a natural relation to us, for whenever we do not find it, there is

35 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Fī mahiyyat al-šawq al-ṭabīʿī*, in *Rasāʾil falsafiyya*, 97. A full critical edition, translation, and study of the text remain to be done.

36 Ibn Bāǧǧa, 97.

> desire, so that finding this [cause] is the goal to which we are moved by this desire.[37]

Listing the four causes, Ibn Bāǧǧa explains that we connect the four causes to the object we are considering, and this consideration instigates an individual case of desire, which continues until we arrive at the ultimate cause in question, here exemplified through the example of matter. He continues listing the desire for each cause, concluding that the desire continues until the subject locates and understands the ultimate cause, be it the agent, the goal, or the form.

It is worth considering what might motivate Ibn Bāǧǧa to make such remarks about desire in a discussion of *demonstration*, this being a rather unusual thing to do. If we work on the supposition that this treatise was later removed from Ibn Bāǧǧa's remarks on al-Fārābī's *Book on Demonstration* (*Kitāb al-Burhān*), we find that there is nothing at all about desiring in what would be the corresponding text of al-Fārābī on which Ibn Bāǧǧa remarks.[38] In the version found within his remarks, Ibn Bāǧǧa appends this digression to a consideration of what al-Fārābī means by the phrase, "Demonstration, taken absolutely, is the certain syllogism." This statement recurs at the end of the treatise, as Ibn Bāǧǧa identifies the best type of demonstration as that which is potentially a definition, such that "the composite definition is the most perfect definition, because desire does not remain after it at all."[39] Thus, Ibn Bāǧǧa offers us a view into both the type of desire that is explicitly human, and the only type of desire that ceases, because it is the only type for which one may (1) attain its object certainly, which entails that one (2) has attained an object that does not stop or change. Although Ibn Bāǧǧa specified human desire above in both *On the Inquiry into the Striving Power* and *On the Human Goal*, he nowhere else goes into such careful and precise analysis about what exactly satisfies a human being's most human desire. Thus, he discusses this desire within a discussion of demonstration because it is only by demonstration that human beings attain not only what they most desire as human beings, but also what they desire at all levels: the eternal and unchanging. It is worth highlighting just how stringent this conception of human action and thus human *desire* is. Rigorously speaking, properly human desire is for investigating causality and following this questioning to the intelligibles. In his discussion of *On the Essence of Natural Desire*, Wirmer helpfully clarifies a basic

37 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Fī mahiyyat al-šawq al-ṭabīʿī*, 98.

38 Wirmer, "Das natürliche Begehren," 224.

39 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Fī mahiyyat al-šawq al-ṭabīʿī*, 101.

way in which Ibn Bāǧǧa follows al-Fārābī in understanding the search through knowledge as a kind a motion, which comes to a stop when we reach the conclusion of a syllogism and thus know what we were after.[40] As Wirmer also highlights, al-Fārābī's choice of terminology is revealing on this point, insofar as al-Fārābī uses the phrase "*wuqūf ʿalā*," "stops at," as we saw in the previous chapter. Ibn Bāǧǧa uses this phrase as further proof of the inherence of movement in seeking knowledge, since al-Fārābī's term for knowing implies stopping.[41]

At this point in our discussion we turn to the other place in which Ibn Bāǧǧa discusses such distinctly *human* desire, which is his commentary to *GC*.[42] Again, desire arises within a discussion of the motive power, which is itself set within a discussion of potency in general. His goal in the section is to explain the procedure according to which the human intellect prompts motion, but in particular, *essential* motion. Ibn Bāǧǧa argues that essential human activity is the completion of concepts in our minds, so that the aim of such activity, conceptualization (*taṣawwur*), is driven by a desire (*tašawwuq*) for the concept's perfection, *kamāl*.[43] Part of what Ibn Bāǧǧa addresses is in what way one may understand the relation between the concept and desire such that there is yet an unmoved mover responsible for the desire's motion: "Each conceptualization is deficient, so that there joins with it—if there is nothing preventing it—a desire for its perfection, so that [it] is moved by this desire, and [it] is that being conceived (*mutaṣawwar*) inasmuch as it is a mover by this description."[44] As a result, the concept, when deficient, acts from an intermediate position, from one direction as a mover and from another as that which is moving, the latter of which is the concept insofar as it is deficient and only postulated. As a result of this analysis, he claims

40 Wirmer, "Das natürliche Begehren," 224.

41 As explained by Wirmer, "Diesen Bewegungscharakter beweisförmiger Erkenntnis arbeitet Ibn Bāǧǧa in seiner Analyse von al-Fārābīs Text heraus: Angesichts des Kontextes, in dem es um die Bestimmung von „Wissen" (*ʿilm*) geht, erstaunt al-Fārābīs Gebrauch von „Kenntnis" (*wuqūf ʿalā*), der sich aber, wie Ibn Bāǧǧa erklärt, durch seine Konnotation des „Stehenbleibens" (Ursprungsbedeutung der Wurzel *WQF*) rechtfertigt, eben weil der Beweis eine Bewegung der Seele ist, die ein „Prinzip", also einen Anfang, und auch einen Ziel- und Haltepunkt hat." From Wirmer, "Das natürliche Begehren," 224.

42 See Wirmer, "Das natürliche Begehren," 225–226, for his interpretation of what this discussion in the commentary on *GC* adds to the account from *On the Essence of Natural Desire*.

43 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Libro de la generación y corrupción*, Ar. 30–31. Translations of this text are my own, with consultation of the Spanish translation.

44 Ibn Bāǧǧa, Ar. 31.

> So the desire (*tašawwuq*) therefore is external to [the conceptualization's] essence, except that it is joined with [the essence] by a natural connection that does not depart from it, but the human being has this desire only insofar as [the human being] is passionately longing (*ʿāšiq*) for completion, so that the desire for perfection is joined with the conceptualization of the concept. If this is so, then the mover is external to the moved, although it was already evident that it is in it.[45]

Ibn Bāğğa makes clear that the desiring is *not* part of the essence, that it is external to the subject, and that it adheres to it as a sort of help or tool serving the perfection of conceptualization. Although desire is not proper to the essence of conceptualization, it is closely connected to it by nature. In turn, this desire is also related to the human essence given that the conceptualization is in the human subject. As we saw above, ultimately, human perfection lies in attaining to the level of the intelligibles, and this desire is integral to the realization of that goal and continues until one reaches it. Nevertheless, it is external to the human essence as such, being only for incomplete concepts, and thus ceasing when one has perfected one's concepts. Ibn Bāğğa then specifies the next step in human activity as assent, *taṣdīq*: "Let us distinguish here the assent from the conceptualization, for the goal in assent is certainty (*al-yaqīn*), and we do not find an end in conceptualization."[46] Thus in attaining their goal, human beings go beyond conceptualization and reach for certainty, and it is this certainty that occasions desire's cessation.[47]

> The primary conceptualizations on the whole are those to which desire is connected, not that they are the object[s] of desire, and [they] are the categories and what falls under them. By them come about for us the desires that are related to us, just like recovery relates to medicine. Were it not for [the primary conceptualizations], we would not desire perfection at all. We have these [primary conceptualizations] by nature, and by them is a human being naturally a human being. One who does not have these [primary conceptualizations] does not have reason (*fikr*), and has nothing of human potential. The giver of these is the intellect, so that the agent

45 Ibn Bāğğa, Ar. 31–32.

46 Ibn Bāğğa, Ar. 33.

47 For a general overview of the notions of conceptualization and assent in Ibn Bāğğa, see, again, Forcada, "Ibn Bājja on Taṣawwur and Tasdīq."

> intellect therefore has an essential relation to this material intellect. We examine this relation in the *Book on the Soul*.[48]

We find here again that one is not a human unless one desires the perfection of one's concepts, this perfection being essentially human. In the previous section, we read Ibn Bāǧǧa specify that the true end of all conceptualization, there called consideration, are the intelligibles. Here in his commentary on *GC* and in *On the Essence of Natural Desire* we read more explicitly that desire itself is external to conceptualization and thus for what reason it stops—the human being obtains what they really want: perfection. More interesting for our purposes is Ibn Bāǧǧa's insistence that desire and conceptualization are distinct, and that although there is a built-in connection between our material intellect and the agent intellect, desire itself remains a distinct and subordinate activity.

After specifying more finely the relation of desiring to conceptualization, Ibn Bāǧǧa clarifies desire with regard to its different objects. He offers a general overview of the three types of desire, as we saw them above. The first half concerns sensible desire, about which he writes the following.

> Whenever sensations come about, bodily desires (*aš̆wāq jismāniyya*) are connected to them, either to flee or to follow, the end of those desires being the safety (*salāma*) of the sensible body. [Those] desires are appetites (*šahawāt*). Whenever imaginations come about, the desires that are connected to them are from the genus of those sensible desires, except that they are more intense in their determination and organization. The motion from them is sensible in connection, and more suitable for [what] is useful and harmful. But the connected desires are from the genus of these sensible desires.[49]

Here we have the first two of the threefold division of desire with which we are by now familiar, except that here he defines bodily desires explicitly as appetites. These desires for the safety of the body are already familiar from al-Fārābī's discussion in the *Phil. of Aristotle*. Within Ibn Bāǧǧa's discussion of the striving soul operating in search of perpetuity, desire for the soundness of the body functions as part of this search. Regarding imagination, Ibn Bāǧǧa makes as clear as possible first that desires connected to imagination are sensible, and second for what reason they are sensible, namely, that desires within imagi-

48 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Libro de la Generación y Corrupción*, Ar. 37–38.

49 Ibn Bāǧǧa, 39.

nation come from sensible objects—on the Aristotelian model, through the common sense. Thus, any desire that is located within imagination is not an intellectual desire, but a sensible one. For this reason, it is also an animal desire. The passage continues:

> So, whenever conceptualizations come about, two kinds of desires are connected to them. On the part of what exists from the will (*irāda*) of the human being, desires are connected to it from the genus of sensible and imaginative desires—except that their motions are organized and are those which give the utmost rankings of organization—and their end is in some way similar to the ends of the material forms, it being as if they were compounded from genera of all desires. [The other kind] is insofar as there are conceptualizations of existent things, [conceptualizations that] are already free from them. So, in that case, theoretical desire is connected to [those conceptualizations]. That is clear in itself and the entailment is necessary, and knowledge of it from this examination is certain and primary: about it there is no doubt and no dispute.[50]

Strikingly, this is the only passage I have found in which Ibn Bāǧǧa mentions the human *will* at all. Following al-Fārābī, he connects it to sensible and imaginative desire, and thus actually places it below what he identified as properly human: the completion of concepts that leads to assent.[51] I am not sure what we ought to make of this remark, but to my knowledge Ibn Bāǧǧa does not consider the concept of will elsewhere, and even here uses it only once. Ultimately, when one has a theoretical desire to know something, the premises act as a movement that leads to the conclusion, at which we stop.[52] This is a clarification of the point discussed above in relation to *On the Essence of Natural Desires*, and a clarification of Ibn Bāǧǧa's earlier claim that the conceptualization moves by way of striving.[53]

We have found a careful understanding of desire emerging from Ibn Bāǧǧa's considerations. While desire indeed stems from one specific power and is itself distinct from the rational edifice that underlies human perfection, Ibn Bāǧǧa draws desire and reason closely together. Nevertheless, the role human desire plays is not permanent, since the goal of human perfection is perfectly attainable (albeit probably for very few people). Importantly, desire is not required

50 Ibn Bāǧǧa, Ar. 39–40.
51 See al-Fārābī, *Mabādiʾ*, 205–206.
52 Puig Montada, "Ibn Bājja."
53 Wirmer, "Das natürliche Begehren," 226–227.

for imagination or reason to function *as such*, that is, with respect to themselves as powers. Rather, desire works as part of the activation of imagination or reason in the human being or the animal having these powers, and in turn for the sustainment of their activity, itself being the power that works toward perpetuity. To the extent that remarks about desire survive in Ibn Bāǧǧa's *Book on the Soul*, they echo the account we have just discussed, and desire for each part of the essential definition of a potential of knowledge, once generated, must cease upon the attainment of essential knowledge.[54]

To the extent that we are now familiar with the two models of desire, the non-inherent nature of desire on Ibn Bāǧǧa's account should be clear. The various desires that arise are from a combination of another power (sensation, imagination, reason), with which the striving soul acts, itself a genus for those various types of desires. Further, although desire is *natural* to human beings, and they will by nature desire their own perfection, there is not some basic, essential desire that they always have. Rather, human desire is always worked out at the level of conceptualization by means of logical inquiry, and the human essence is perfected partly by the motivation of the desire that works in service of conceptualization. This desire, as Ibn Bāǧǧa made clear above, should cease and is external to the human essence. Throughout this discussion it has become clear that he understands human desire to be logically structured and rationally regulated. The nature of logical, rational inquiry—that conclusions are reached and knowledge is gained—grounds the fact that cessation of desire typifies human perfection. In the wake of al-Fārābī and characteristic of the Almoravid scientific atmosphere, we find logic being of profound importance with respect to desire itself. As Miquel Forcada rightly claims of Ibn Bāǧǧa, "To him, logic is something more than a propaedeutic and instrumental discipline. Indeed, it is more than the underlying skeleton of any reasoning: it is an art that provides the ultimate certainty."[55] In fact, we may add to this that logic is the methodology by which desire plays out and is organized in the human being. This account of perfection stands in distinct contrast, to varying degrees, to other accounts of human desire found thus far in this study. On the one hand, both Plotinus and the Arabic adaptation of his text deny logic and syllogisms a role in the ultimate stage of truth acquisition. On the other hand, while Aristotle and in al-Fārābī both placed logic in the center of scientific activity, theoretical *desire* posed a problem insofar as it did not clearly fit into the account of desire proper in the *DA*. Within Ibn Bāǧǧa's unique epistemo-

54 One can find these remarks translated from private editions of the manuscript into Spanish and German: *Libro sobre el alma*, 130–131; and Wirmer, *Vom Denken der Natur*, 726.

55 Forcada, "Ibn Bāǧǧa and the Classifications," 297.

logical framework, in which logic is an essential aspect, he offers desire plays a crucial role in the process and attainment of human perfection.[56] The logical foundation of the human goal runs throughout Ibn Bāǧǧa's accounts of human activity and the attainment of the acquired intellect as the ultimate goal, something which I will discuss at the end of the chapter. Before moving on to round out Ibn Bāǧǧa's account of human perfection, let us first make more explicit the grounds on which he rejects everything but reason pure and simple as constitutive of the human goal.

## 3 Striving Soul and the Body

Before turning to a more extended discussion of fulfillment of the human perfection in Ibn Bāǧǧa's thought, I would like to fill out his understanding of the human good by briefly looking at an example of a *failure* to attain the human goal. I am referring here to his critique and dismissal of the Sufis, who, as we will see in the next chapter, Ibn Ṭufayl defends against Ibn Bāǧǧa's accusations. Ibn Bāǧǧa's criticism of the Sufis is partially connected to the notion of desire, insofar as he diagnoses their failure as a failure to act according to the true human function. For, as he will argue, the Sufis satisfy the desire of their imagination, not of their reason. However, first we must understand the basic connection between imagination and matter, for, as we have seen, Ibn Bāǧǧa claims that the desire of what is in the imagination is still fundamentally connected to matter. Thus, this desire fails to be human and thus fails to reach the level of human activity. On these grounds, Ibn Bāǧǧa calls it an animal activity. We find at the end of this section that he applies the same framework of desire throughout all levels of the body, and the ubiquity of the framework makes clearer his austerity regarding human versus animal desire.

We find discussion of the relation of striving to the body in multiple places. In the *Epistle of Farewell* Ibn Bāǧǧa summarizes a discussion of motion, saying it is clear "that the inborn heat (*al-ḥārr al-ġarīzī*) is the first moved, and that the first mover is a form (*ṣūra*) it has."[57] We have here a model of movement analogous to what we have seen before, as desire plus a concept, which is functioning even at the primitive level of the inborn heat responsible for initial bodily movement. Earlier in his *Book on the Soul*, Ibn Bāǧǧa discusses something similar, explaining the function of heat within the body as related

56 On logic in Ibn Bāǧǧa's conception of philosophy, see Puig Montada, "Philosophy in Andalusia," 158–159; and Di Giovanni, "Motifs of Andalusian Philosophy," 219–220.

57 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Risālat al-wadāʿ*, 91.

to the form within the imagination. He begins the text with an explication of the nutritive power of soul, explaining the role that innate heat plays on that level within the process of elemental transformation whereby a simple elemental mixture becomes a bodily form.[58]

> This heat [that changes the elements into a body with a form] is the instrument of the soul and is called the innate animate heat, as has been explained in the seventeenth section of the *Book of Animals*. The innate heat is, therefore, the organ of this soul. Then, the nutritive soul first moves the innate heat, which is moved by itself, and moves the food through innate heat.[59]

This explanation is of a basic function of the innate heat, namely, in what way food is turned into nutrition, establishing that innate heat works on the level of the nutritive power. Later in his discussion of the imaginative power, Ibn Bāǧǧa ties together the function of the nutritive power with imagination as both being motive powers in the soul.

> It is through this power [of imagination] that animals move in various ways and that the striving power is moved, and through it animals have many arts and crafts, and look after their progeny, as for instance, ants and bees. This power is the most noble in animals without reason (*al-ḥayawān ġayr al-nāṭiq*), and in animals without reason there is no other moving power more perfect than this power. The moving powers that are in animals by nature are the nutritive and sensitive power[s], and from all these exist the actions the animal has specifically from its essence, since mover and moved are together in them.[60]

Ibn Bāǧǧa outlines the motive powers of the animal as threefold, consisting of nutrition, sensation, and, highest of all, imagination. We saw above the role that sensation and imagination played in motion, namely, by providing the object apprehended which is then either desired or avoided. Although he has here listed nutrition as a motive power, it is not clear in what way it is, since there is not yet an explicit connection between the nutritive power and the striving

58 For an extensive discussion of the generation of the elements and the role of powers in the process, see Wirmer, *Vom Denken der Natur*, 355–366. For a discussion of innate heat, see his chapter 11 of the same work.

59 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Ibn Bāǧǧah's ʿIlm al-Nafs*, 67; *Kitāb al-Nafs*, 55.

60 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Ibn Bāǧǧah's ʿIlm al-Nafs*, 111; *Kitāb al-Nafs*, 140.

power. He dwells on this point at greater length in the *Conjunction*, where, in preparation of his discussion of intellect, he explains the framework of bodily motion and its relation to the soul. In this discussion he makes most explicit the relation between innate heat, imagination, and the concept on account of which the innate heat acts. He discusses movement and the body as follows.

> The initial mover in humans is something proper that brings about motion by means of two kinds of instruments. The first is corporeal and the second is incorporeal, where some of the corporeal [instruments] are voluntary and others are involuntary. [In the case of voluntary instruments], they are like the hand, leg, and lung, which [voluntarily] play the flute. The involuntary instruments that have specific extremities are called "organs," like sinew, whereas those that are fluid, like bile, do not have a name from the perspective that they are instruments.[61]

He adds a clarificatory comment to his characterization of corporeal, involuntary instruments, saying, "In reality and priority the innate heat is the instrument of instruments," since it is necessarily always at work, and since every other part of the body is related to it.[62] In a terminological clarification, he identifies this innate heat with the innate vital spirit:

> The innate heat is called "innate vital spirit," (*al-rūḥ al-ġarīzī*) on account of being an instrument of the motive power, and [the motive power] is [the innate vital spirit's] form and initial mover, whereas "spirit" is said of the soul and according to what we have described.[63]

Thus, the innate heat surfaces as the instrument that the soul uses in order to move the body, although the apparatus underlying this movement is not yet clear. "The motive power" to which he refers is, as will become clearer, a reference to the form or concept to which the striving soul attaches and after which the body moves in virtue of the innate heat. He specifies as follows.

> It has been explained elsewhere that the intelligible objects are not forms of the innate vital spirit; for they are not forms of bodies, and they cannot be that [namely, forms of the innate vital spirit] unless they are material … So, [the mover] is not something connected with body, but moves the

61 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Ittiṣāl*, 186; Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Conjunction*, 271.

62 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Ittiṣāl*, 186; Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Conjunction*, 271–272.

63 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Ittiṣāl*, 187; Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Conjunction*, 272.

> body only by means of incorporeal forms, which are its instrument (this has been summarized in the *Epistle of Farewell*).[64]

Ibn Bāǧǧa now differentiates two different types of forms that might have a relation to the innate vital spirit in order to account for motion: corporeal forms *of* the innate vital spirit (to which he here refers but has not yet made explicit) and incorporeal forms (e.g. those connected to imagination). If we turn to the *Epistle of Farewell*, we find a discussion of the self, the soul, and motion (which I mentioned briefly above) that is presumably the discussion to which he refers in the *Conjunction*. Here, he claims that "the imagination attains a form for the innate spirit," and that "the first motion which is in us is compounded from imagination and striving, and the striving is signified by the soul, and because of that, I say, 'My soul inclines me,'" although the pronoun refers to the rational discursive power.[65] There are many layers of movers and forms involved here, so let me summarize what I take us to have so far. At the material level, we have the forms of the innate vital spirit (= innate heat), after which the innate heat presumably moves; then, we have the incorporeal form presented by e.g. the imagination, which itself plays the role of ultimate mover (by presenting an object of desire that spurs animal motion). As yet unclear is the connection between the apparently corporeal form in the innate spirit, and the incorporeal form that nevertheless functions within bodily motion. We still need an account of the relation between whatever is in the innate heat and the ultimate mover. Ibn Bāǧǧa continues in the account in the *Epistle of Farewell* by turning to desire and striving to account for this relation.

> Imagination is the mover, and one should not doubt that [...] after motion except by desire. The desire is a relation, and the desire sometimes occurs in the imagination and [sometimes] in reason. And the animals without reason have only the desire of the imagination, [which] is the highest of [their] steps. The rational desire is the desire of the correct, and it is [that which] only the human has as a distinguishing feature.[66]

There is a short lacuna in the manuscript here, but added to this already familiar text is the claim that desire is a relation. Indeed, he goes on to offer an account of the relation between imagination and body by connecting this framework to the body through the relation of the concept, striving, and the innate spirit.

---

64 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Ittiṣāl*, 188–189; Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Conjunction*, 273.

65 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Risālat al-wadāʿ*, 100–101.

66 Ibn Bāǧǧa, 101.

> The mover is the consideration and the imagination, and the moved is the striving part, which is a form in the innate spirit, which is a body. It was already made clear that the first mover is compounded from two things. One of them is the mover, and it is the consideration or imagination. And the other [is] that by which [it] moves, and [that] is the striving, except that these two are not bodies, but a relation of the consideration to striving, a relation of the mover to the instrument by which it moves. So, there are three genera of relations. One of them is in the understanding, [and] a relation of the artisan to its instruments, just as the carpenter to his instruments. Then [there is] the relation of the soul to its instruments, and [those] are the organs. And then [there is] the relation of the consideration and imagination to the striving.[67]

Here we finally have the clarification that the connection between the concept or imagination and the innate spirit is the striving, which, while not being a body, is a form *in the innate spirit itself*. In order to account for the way in which a concept spurs motion, he sets striving into a relative state between the body and the concept. As a result, the concept, by means of the striving soul, has a relation to the innate spirit, since the striving is simply a form in the innate spirit, and thus itself is intimately connected with the innate spirit. This threefold aspect of movement is similar to what we read in *DA* III.10, 433b13–18, that there is what initiates motion (τὸ κινοῦν/*al-fāʿil al-muḥarrik* = the desired object), that by which it initiates motion (ᾧ κινεῖ/*al-šayʾ allaḏī bi-hī yafʿalu al-muḥarrik* = power of desire), and that which is moved (τὸ κινούμενον/*al-mutaḥarrik al-mafʿūl bi-hī* = the animal).[68] In more explicit terms, Ibn Bāǧǧa offers an account of animal motion in which the striving power (= desire) is, as a form, in the innate heat of the body, which is the material element that effects animal movement. The striving power is itself connected to the concept (= the desired object, or the good) by indeed desiring it.

Ibn Bāǧǧa further articulates this relation by describing it as threefold: first, "in the understanding," as the relation of the artisan to his instruments; second, as that between the soul and its instrument, i.e. the organs; and third, straightforwardly as that between the concept and striving. All three of these relations seem vaguely similar, but connecting them to the framework from *DA* III.10 clarifies the subtle differences. First, the mover is the concept that is at work in imagination or reason, and this relation would be that by which, for

67 Ibn Bāǧǧa, 101–102.

68 The Arabic terms come from the anonymous translation of the *DA*, Badawī, *Fī l-nafs*, 83.

example, a carpenter would build a table, with the form of the table as the ultimate mover, τὸ κινοῦν. Second, the power of desire (for Ibn Bāǧǧa, the striving power) accounts for the third listed relation, namely the go-between of the concept and the body, ᾧ κινεῖ. Last, the striving power accounts for the second listed relation, as the connection between the soul and its instruments, in this case, the innate heat that moves the animal, τὸ κινούμενον. Put together, these three relations give us the structure by which we can account for movement in an animal.

In his remarks titled *On Striving* (*Bi-l-nuzūʿiyya*), we find this framework reiterated, where he explains the innate heat with respect to its source, the heart.

> It was already made clear in another place that the heart or what takes its place is the principle of the animal, and that it [is] a spring for the innate heat existing in the body, and by the innate heat are all the existing motions in the body, I mean, by that [is] the nourishment and the kinds of striving and imagination and thought. So with the digestion, and if it is in the stomach, it is like [it is with] writing. So that if it is that the pen is that which traces the letters, the one tracing is the human.[69]

Here we have a similar framework as above, such that there is a mover (the heart), that which moves (the innate heat), and that by which it moves (the stomach). By using the innate heat, the heart accomplishes actions like nutrition and, surprisingly, striving, imagination, and thought. The connection between thought and innate heat in this passage is a bit surprising. Wirmer considers this passage and, in his own analysis, he understands the connection of innate heat to a thinking capacity to be yet along the lines of imagination: "Wenn Ibn Bāǧǧa dem »Überlegen« hier ein körperliches Organ zuweist, dann ist damit wohl eher eine Tätigkeit des Vorstellungsvermögens als des rationalen Vermögens gemeint."[70] Al-Fārābī makes a similar point in his *On the Perfect State* in a passage I cited above, when he connects the body and striving power after specifying the relationship of the striving power to other powers. There he connected the striving powers to the nerves, sinews, and eventually the limbs by which motion is accomplished, identifying the heart as the source of the striving power.[71] After he discusses the heart as the source of innate heat, he

69 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Bi-l-nuzūʿiyya*, in *Rasāʾil falsafiyya*, 133.

70 Wirmer, *Vom Denken der Natur*, 494n99. For more discussion for the heart's relation to the innate heat, see Wirmer, *Vom Denken der Natur*, 488–493.

71 Al-Fārābī, *Mabādiʾ*, 170–171. See above, p. 127.

discusses the *brain* and its regulation of that heat, explaining that the imaginative power imagines and the rational power reasons only when the heart is at the right temperature, so that

> It is, again, the brain which serves the heart in giving its heat the right measure which enables it to perform proper acts of imagination, and the right measure which enables it to reason and deliberate correctly, and the right measure which enables it to remember and to recollect correctly.[72]

Ibn Bāǧǧa's discussion would then seem to operate within the same paradigm as al-Fārābī's, since the former identifies the heart and innate heat as necessary conditions of mental function. If we consider Ibn Bāǧǧa's remarks with the Fārābian explanation of the brain's regulatory function in mind, then his claim amounts to saying that the heart provides the heat that the brain regulates in order to provide the material support needed for various mental functions.[73] Additionally, the direct, material connection between the body and the imagination is something that, like al-Fārābī, Ibn Bāǧǧa takes seriously, since it renders imagination and its acts fundamentally inferior to the acts of intellection because they are connected with matter. This connection not only renders the object of imagination corruptible, but makes imagination dependent on material objects.[74] In his examination of the power of imagination in his *Book on the Soul*, Ibn Bāǧǧa explains the way in which imaginative forms, although apparently removed from matter, are yet still fundamentally connected to it.

> The power of imagination is not completely free from the immattered forms insofar as they are material, but it is in rank far from matter, since this power acts even if the immattered forms are not present, but in its being it needs them by necessity … The power of imagination is not moved unless it is set in motion by sensations, and when there is no sensation this power is not set in motion … But in its being this power is nobler than the common sense, since it is like the end for it.[75]

This passage accounts for why, in Ibn Bāǧǧa's view, operating on the level of imagination fails to reach the human goal: since human beings are capable of attaining an end that is unchanging and eternal, anything less than that is both

72 Al-Fārābī, 178–179.

73 Cf. Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, 103, "*al-qalb ka-mabda' li-l-ḥayawān*."

74 Al-Fārābī is famous for this point as well.

75 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Kitāb al-nafs*, 139; Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Ibn Bāǧǧah's ʿIlm al-Nafs*, 110.

deficient and, in the end, not what human beings *as human beings* really desire. Thus, on account of imagination's need for material forms coming to it from the common sense, it fundamentally correlates to matter and deficiency. This discussion has also shown the depth of the activity of the striving power, and the various levels of the human being on which desire is continuously being worked out. As a result, it emphasizes the importance, according to Ibn Bāǧǧa, of using the correct tools for identifying, articulating, and realizing the objects of our desire. It clearly could be quite easy to be misled on the road to perfection, and in the end, to chase after objects that will not satisfy and activities that will not perfect.

## 4 Ibn Bāǧǧa on al-Ġazalī and the Sufis

The connection of desire to the body and its functions also forms the philosophical basis for Ibn Bāǧǧa's rejection of the Sufis'—and al-Ġazālī's—claim to truth acquisition. Here I want only to outline what is most basically at issue in this rejection, and I will leave the detailed explication of his critique for another time. My goal here is on the one hand to show the way in which the striving power is implicated in this rejection, and on the other hand to set the stage for Ibn Ṭufayl's rebuttal in the next chapter. One finds the only passage criticizing the Sufis that includes the striving soul in the *Conjunction*. This critique comes within a discussion of the unity of the prior and the posterior. There, Ibn Bāǧǧa explains that when an intermediate form comes to be in imagination, the effects of the striving soul confuse the subject.

> Owing to the striving soul, one comes to have a state resembling awe, which in a certain way resembles the state that appears when sensing something great and frightful. That state is called "wonder." The Sufis have exaggerated in describing this state, and that is [because] this state appears to them owing to the objects of imagination that they find in their souls according to what they believe, regardless of whether they are true or false.[76]

Ibn Bāǧǧa finds this situation problematic because true and false, as he goes on to explain, are categories "due to another striving part, namely, the rationally striving part (*al-juz' al-nuzūʿī al-nuṭqī*)," since truth and falsity are judged by

76 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Ittiṣāl*, 201; Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Conjunction*, 282.

reason alone.[77] Most germane to our investigation is Ibn Bāǧǧa's discussion of the confusion that occurs in the striving power, which in the Sufis' case leads them to latch on to the imaginative soul and its concepts, rather than to act by the rationally striving part. Since, as Ibn Bāǧǧa sees it, the Sufi experience of wonder stems from an animal aspect of their soul, he claims that in these moments they actually act from a state close to that of the masses, a serious insult to the Sufis' claims to achievement of an elite level of truth and realization. Ibn Bāǧǧa explains that when the imaginative power reaches toward intellect, it receives something analogous to intellect, a reference to the starting point of conceptualization, a process that should ultimately supersede imagination. The similarity between the beginning of the conceptualization in the imagination and that of the rational power makes this mistake possible. Just prior in the *Conjunction*, Ibn Bāǧǧa distinguishes three levels on which an individual might grasp the intellectual or spiritual forms, using a mirror image as an explanatory metaphor. He claims that, "In the case of whoever comes to be in the second intermediary rank, he is more like the polished surface, such as the mirror's surface, which is itself seen and by which other things are seen as well. He is nearer to being purified than those first while still being in a state of passing away."[78] Ibn Bāǧǧa claims the Sufis reach only this second level of conceptualization, and, as we saw, even suggests that they easily slide back to a lower state. I highlight this example because it is perhaps the most Neoplatonic motif that Ibn Bāǧǧa includes in his writing. This image goes back to al-Kindī, but is found earlier in the Arabic Plotinus and, of course, in the work of Plotinus himself. Further, Ibn Ṭufayl uses this image in his own account of divine union, as does Avicenna in the *Pointers and Reminders* and al-Ġazālī in his *Niche of Lights*.[79] However, I do not highlight this aspect to suggest we read any particular Neoplatonic theory into this metaphor, but rather to caution against doing so. Although the image itself was popularized by Neoplatonists (or those with Neoplatonic influences and predilections), its use by Avicenna and especially here by Ibn Bāǧǧa speaks rather *against* making any such assumption.[80] We ought further remember that Ibn Bāǧǧa was educated and worked in Zaragoza, where Neoplatonic philosophy was well known but notorious, and that these

77 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Ittiṣāl*, 201; Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Conjunction*, 282.

78 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Ittiṣāl*, 200; Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Conjunction*, 282.

79 See Genequand "Platonism and Hermetism," and Adamson, "Two Early Arabic Doxographies."

80 Altmann did interpret such an image as evidence that Ibn Bāǧǧa was to some extent a Neoplatonist, in Altmann, "Ibn Bāǧǧa on Man's Ultimate Felicity," 84–88. Against such a reading, see Wirmer, *Vom Denken der Natur*, 36–40.

images were generally well known. Mere use of such an image in no way commits him to any Neoplatonic doctrine, and indeed his general philosophical system speaks against it.

Ibn Bāǧǧa clarifies the connection to sensation in the Sufis' experience and explanation of the goal of the human being in his *Governance*, again connecting their experience to imagination. He explains the noetics behind the Sufi experience, again claiming that the presence of intermediate spiritual forms leads to emotive states the Sufis mistaken for the ultimate experience of reality. He says the combination of powers that happens in the imagination explains the mistake, "Because at its combination there was present to one who unified to it strange forms and sensations by a frightful power of the reflection, unblemished, more beautiful in many ways than what is in existence, they believe that the end is apprehension of this."[81] Here too Ibn Bāǧǧa highlights that the Sufis have mistaken a *new* level of intellection for the *highest* level of intellection, as a result of the wonder and fear they experience at its attainment. Ibn Bāǧǧa singles out al-Ġazalī for criticism, even quoting from his *Deliverance from Error* (*Munqiḏ min al-ḍalāl*) as an example of the very thing Ibn Bāǧǧa is criticizing.

> Therefore al-Ġazalī says that it is apprehension of spiritual things, hearing spiritual noise, and witnessing of the spiritual substances. He presented the grandeur of what he witnessed in the verse: 'It was what it was, something of what [it was], I cannot mention.' Because of that, the Sufis allege that apprehension of utmost happiness might be not by learning but rather by leisure, and by not ceasing for a moment in the recollection of what is sought.[82]

Ibn Bāǧǧa takes al-Ġazalī's inability to express what he experienced, and his description that is analogous to physical experience, to indicate that his experience was only at the unification of the three powers that lead to the formation of an imperfect spiritual form, and specifically *not* at the highest level of perfection at which one attains pure spiritual forms. Ibn Bāǧǧa reiterates this criticism of al-Ġazalī in more detail in the *Epistle of Farewell*, and goes so far as to claim that al-Ġazalī's proclamations have misled others onto his erroneous path. Ibn Bāǧǧa's quotation from the *Deliverance* is important, because this quotation, as we will see in the following chapter, is that same with which Ibn Ṭufayl will begin his *Ḥayy*, not as a criticism, but to set the stage for the entire text. Ibn

81 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Tadbīr al-Mutawaḥḥid*, 138.

82 Ibn Bāǧǧa, 138.

Bāǧǧa, by contrast, remarks that al-Ġazalī should have remembered the end of the *NE*: "He was mindless of what [Aristotle] said in the eleventh book when he said, 'It is tranquility.' He did not reflect on this saying or any of what was established by demonstration in the rest of his books."[83] Here, Ibn Bāǧǧa expresses al-Ġazalī's shortcoming in a new way, namely, as a failure to appreciate Aristotle, regarding both contemplation and logical demonstration. In fact, this remark leads us back to Ibn Bāǧǧa's claims regarding the aim of human life and thought that I examined earlier in this chapter, namely, that the ultimate end of human essential activity and thought is the perfection of concepts, which leads to assent and certainty. There Ibn Bāǧǧa referred to this tranquility as well, and these two texts show the weight the contemplative goal at the end of the *EN* carried for him. Human perfection occurs by way of demonstration, and it is only by demonstration that our striving and desire cease, since it is only by the perfection of concepts that one reaches the truly eternal. Ibn Bāǧǧa's criticism of the Sufis rests ultimately on this aspect of his noetics and his commitment to a logically structured account of truth. However, his criticism also rests on the same threefold structure of conceptualization that is fundamental to his account of striving and desire, and he rejects the Sufis' accomplishments on the same grounds that he rejected objects of desire that do not supersede imagination. Imagination is essentially an animal activity, since it is directly connected to sensation. In his criticism above we see this connection highlighted when he censures the use of descriptions of the experience of the highest level that resemble sensation in any way.

Before concluding, I want to raise briefly an interpretation of Ibn Bāǧǧa's intellect theory that aligns him *with* the Sufis, whom, I have argued, he considers himself categorically to have refuted. Alexander Altmann discusses Ibn Bāǧǧa's position on the final stage of intellectual development, specifically as discussed in the *Epistle of Farewell*, and interprets it as something that both is a divine gift, and yet a stage impossible without the previous preparatory levels and achievements.[84] Most germane to this discussion is Altmann's interpretation of the highest level of intellectual achievement as argued by Ibn Bāǧǧa to be something not entirely foreign to *Sufi* experience. He claims, "It is clear that to Ibn Bāǧǧa the ultimate stage, although based on the preceding one, represents a mystical experience not far in its effects upon the soul from

83 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Risālat al-wadāʿ*, 96–97. As I discussed in the previous chapter, in transmission the *EN* comprised eleven rather than ten books owing to the interpolation of additional material. Thus, Ibn Bāǧǧa here refers to the end of the tenth book.

84 Altmann, "Ibn Bāǧǧa on Man's Ultimate Felicity," 90, 92, respectively.

what the Sūfīs claim to experience."[85] Wirmer discusses Altmann's "Fehlinterpretation" at length, highlighting the hasty conclusion against which I warned above. He points out that since Altmann connected the images Ibn Bāǧǧa used to Neoplatonism, "Das führt ihn dazu, Ibn Bāǧǧas Ausführungen mehr auf die benutzen Bilder und Texte—das Höhlengleichnis, die Metapher des Spiegels, einen neuplatonisch inspirierten Ḥadīṯ, ein Proklos-Fragment—zu achten als auf die theoretischen Positionen, für die Ibn Bāǧǧa sie einsetzt."[86] Wirmer connects the misunderstanding of Altmann—and, as he argues, also of Genequand—to the assumption made by both scholars that there are intelligibles over and above matter, a variety of Platonic forms, which Ibn Bāǧǧa himself would not accept. Wirmer rightly identifies the fact that Genequand's selection of texts for his edition highlights the somewhat monolithic view of Ibn Bāǧǧa's thought (notwithstanding Genequand's fervent disagreement with aspects of Altmann's analysis). This myopic focus is further evident in the fact that, generally, most of Ibn Bāǧǧa's texts remain unknown outside of a highly specialized readership.

In addition to Wirmer's assessment, it is clear from the above examination that there is no way in which Ibn Bāǧǧa condones the Sufis' encounter as anything like the highest encounter of the truth. Altmann cites as evidence the passage from the *Conjunction* I examined above, wherein Ibn Bāǧǧa criticizes the Sufis for mistaking wonder for experience of reality. Altmann seems to take Ibn Bāǧǧa's description of failure as something that is close to the actual experience of reality. However, Ibn Bāǧǧa's wholesale dismissal of the Sufis' claims becomes clear when one considers the noetic reality underlying his criticism. Since the Sufis remain fully within the operation of the imagination, they fail completely even to approach the goal of the intellectual activity. In fact, the imagery Ibn Bāǧǧa uses functions as additional backhanded critique, since, in part, this imagery is the explanation of intellectual experience in sensory terms that Ibn Bāǧǧa finds both fundamentally suspicious and indicative of a misunderstanding on the part of al-Ġazalī and the Sufis.

Since, on Ibn Bāǧǧa's account, the striving soul acts as an instrument that connects concepts and the body, the imagination has a basic connection to the body by obtaining its forms from the common sense. As a result, the forms in the imagination fall short of the full, human potential, and this failure is the basis for Ibn Bāǧǧa's rejection of al-Ġazalī and the Sufis. Seen within the light of the imagination's relation to the body, it becomes clear that Ibn

85 Altmann, 92–93.

86 Wirmer, *Vom Denken der Natur*, 36.

Bāǧǧa's criticism of the Sufis is actually characteristic of his system. Further, the discussion of the relation of the body to noetics has consequences for the value of desire within Ibn Bāǧǧa's system. Stepping back, it would seem that for human beings, desire on the level of imagination or sensation (or even below these) is ultimately not valuable at all, except maybe as a necessary tool for forming concepts in the first place by providing the common sense with material to feed to the imagination. This conclusion is in fact correlative to his position on the moral virtue and habit, which I will discuss below. Thus far, I have examined the framework of desiring within the human being, and we have seen the many layers of desiring activity within the human being. In general, then, desire for any given object is not straightforward, and involves the cooperation of multiple powers and layers of forms. The ultimate end of human desire—human perfection—is thus realized by degree, even within the rational powers that characterize the human being. As I will now move on to show, in the end of human perfection, Ibn Bāǧǧa expects the lower levels of desire and conceptualization to be disregarded and expendable.

## 5 Human Excellence and Desire

Having examined the role of desire and striving on all levels of the human being, I would like to situate the above conclusions about desire within Ibn Bāǧǧa's conception of what that desire is for—the human good, i.e. perfection. Thus, I undertake here a brief examination of the ultimate human goal according to Ibn Bāǧǧa, which he identifies as intellection of the universal spiritual forms. As has already become clear, Ibn Bāǧǧa conceives of human perfection largely in terms familiar from the *EN* and a version of al-Fārābī's acquired intellect. We have already seen several passages that indicate that properly human activity occurs unsurprisingly through rational inquiry, and specifically, through demonstration that leads to the conception of intelligibles. The first set of passages I would like to highlight comes from Ibn Bāǧǧa's *Governance of the Solitary*. There, his investigation of the human goal is situated within a discussion of the solitary individual, who must achieve human excellence while living in a vicious city, and who, to some extent, might be responsible as an impetus of change for said city.[87] Ibn Bāǧǧa specifies that the solitary person (the eponymous *al-mutawaḥḥid*) establishes three goals: his bodily form, his particular

87 On this topic, see the article on "weeds" in al-Fārābī and Ibn Bāǧǧa by Alon, "Fārābī's Funny Flora." See also Wirmer, "Arabic Philosophy and the Art of Reading," 205–207.

spiritual form, and his universal spiritual form.[88] When Ibn Bāǧǧa distinguishes between the intellection of particular and universal spiritual forms, he refers in the first case to the forms in the common sense, imagination, and memory, and in the second case the intellection of the universal intelligibles.[89] He identifies the means by which an individual accomplishes these goals:

> Reflection (*rawīya*), inquiry (*baḥṯ*), inference (*istidlāl*), and in general cogitation (*fikra*) are used in inclining toward each one of them, so that if cogitation is not used, that is an animal action, [and] it does not partake of what is human in any way more than the fact that the subject is a human body.[90]

Ibn Bāǧǧa's specification of which powers are properly human are straightforwardly Aristotelian, and therefore hardly surprisingly. We find again the strict requirements for human activity and his willingness to disregard in turn effectively most human beings as genuinely human. His most explicit specification of the human goal is found some pages later, where he specifies the higher level that philosophers themselves must attain as representatives of ideal human beings. On his explanation, in general, noble, non-philosophical human beings fall between the philosophers and those who care only for their bodily form. These individuals, caring for particular spiritual forms, bother with their bodily form only for the sake of those particular spiritual forms. By contrast, the philosopher cares only for universal spiritual forms, while engaging with particular spiritual forms as necessary, but not for their own sake:

> The philosopher must do many spiritual things, but not for their own sake, while he does all the intellectual acts for their own sake. By the bodily [aspect] is the human being an existent, by the spiritual [aspect] is [the human being] more noble, and by the intellectual [aspect] is [the human being] divine and virtuous. So the one who possesses wisdom therefore is necessarily a virtuous, divine human being.[91]

88 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Tadbīr al-mutawaḥḥid*, 158.

89 See Ibn Bāǧǧa, 152 ff. and 164 ff. See also Puig Montada, "Philosophy in Andalusia," 163; and Harvey, "The Place of the Philosopher," 213 ff.

90 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Tadbīr al-mutawaḥḥid*, 158–159.

91 Ibn Bāǧǧa, 163. On Ibn Bāǧǧa's understanding of divine knowledge, see Wirmer, *Vom Denken der Natur*, 111–124, who concludes at 124: "Die „Konjunktion" mit dem aktiven Intellekt ist als deren Gipfelpunkt Teil der Wissenschaft. Der Überstieg, der hier stattfindet, ist nicht ein Grenzübertritt in eine transzendente intelligible Welt, sondern

This philosophical individual alone performs the best acts and attains the ultimate goal, which Ibn Bāǧǧa specifies as

> To intellect the simple, substantial intellects—which are mentioned in the *Metaphysics*, *De Anima*, and *De Sensu*—with that, he is one of those intellects. It holds true of him that he is altogether divine. Transitory bodily attributes disappear from him, as well as the sublime spiritual attributes, and a simple divine attribute befits him.[92]

Indeed, this "divine" goal that Ibn Bāǧǧa sets forth for philosophers is, as Wirmer rightly argues, based ultimately on Aristotle's own remarks on contemplation in *EN* X.7, and is in line with the tranquility Ibn Bāǧǧa cites as the aim of human perfection.[93] In addition, Ibn Bāǧǧa claims at the outset of this discussion that only those who live intellectually will be happy, since the utmost perfection of the human being is spiritual: "Each one who prefers his bodily [existence] to something from his spiritual [existence] is not able to apprehend (*yudrika*) the utmost goal, and therefore, there is not one corporeal [individual who is] happy, and all of [those who are] happy are absolutely spiritual."[94] As a result, Ibn Bāǧǧa's requirements for the highest attainment of human beings is that they become not only an *intellect*, but in doing so, actually become divine—this is ultimately what is means for human beings to realize themselves as human beings. One accomplishes this process by intellection of the universal spiritual forms, also called pure spiritual forms, the highest object of intellection. As discussed above, one undertakes the process of conceptualization and assent in order to apprehend universal objects of knowledge, following one's natural desire to know. As a result, in the philosopher's endeavor to attain the highest levels of noetic activity, the body functions only to keep the human being alive.

In the introduction and explanation of virtue in the *Epistle of Farewell* we find a discussion of the role of the body as instrumental to human virtue. Ibn Bāǧǧa considers the relation of the virtuous person—in his example the courageous person—to the body by way of the familiar analogy of an artisan to his tools. He builds a discussion of volitional disposition (*al-qinya al-irādiyya*) out of an account of natural disposition (*al-qinya al-ṭabīʿiyya*), the latter of which might apply to animals and humans alike. Ibn Bāǧǧa ends the discussion by

---

vielmehr der Übergang von der wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnis zu deren „transzendentalem" Prinzip."

92 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Tadbīr al-mutawaḥḥid*, 164.

93 Wirmer, *Vom Denken der Natur*, 121–122.

94 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Tadbīr al-mutawaḥḥid*, 163.

claiming that not all animals have such a natural disposition: those such as the horse and the dog do not, while those who store away or have a sort of trade, such as the bee and spider, possess such a natural disposition.[95] Thus, when he refers to an animal having a natural disposition he generally seems to mean an animal that is capable of taking care and planning for the future. In fact, this characteristic is required for the examples he intends to discuss in the instances of volitional dispositions, namely, the care that individuals take for their body.

Human beings are most distinguished with respect to voluntary disposition, for they are capable of many skills. This point leads Ibn Bāǧǧa to reintroduce the first mover present in all animals, which brings him to the notion of voluntary disposition and the corresponding voluntary instruments. The difference between the voluntary and natural dispositions is not made explicitly clear, although our above discussion of will tells us enough that the inclusion of the qualifier *irādiyya* entails the intent and rational choice that characterize human beings alone.[96] The distinction is also built upon Aristotle's own distinction between natural and true virtue, which rests upon an individual's ability to choose virtue for its own sake, and thus, more basically, rests upon the individual having the capacity to direct their actions voluntarily toward a specific goal.[97] Regarding the three voluntary dispositions, Ibn Bāǧǧa lays out three comportments a human being might have to their bodily instruments. These options occur along a familiar continuum with two extremes and a mean, in line with his general approach in the *Epistle of Farewell*, which is heavily influenced by the *EN* (and by al-Fārābī's commentary, as Ibn Bāǧǧa tells us). First, one might take no care for their bodily instruments at all, to the point that these instruments quickly deteriorate. The acts of people with this disposition are forbidden because of their pernicious effects. Second, one might take excessive care of their bodily instruments, to the point that they miss out on the benefits of the bodily instruments. As a result, such people are like servants to their

95 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Risālat al-wadāʿ*, 92. Actually there is an inconsistency in the text on this point: Ibn Bāǧǧa initially claims that *all* animals have a *qinya ṭabīʿiyya*, but then denies it to the like of the horse and dog. In fact, by denying the dog any kind of natural aptitude, Ibn Bāǧǧa goes against the grain of philosophical appraisal of the qualities of dogs, which, even in philosophy of the Islamic world, are usually lauded to some extent. The same can surely be said of the horse.

96 See Genequand's comments on this passage in *La Conduite*, 214. On this point, one might consider Aristotle's reference to the industriousness of some animals in *HA* IX.38 422b19 ff., since Ibn Bāǧǧa was familiar with the Arabic versions of Aristotle's zoology. See Kruk, "Ibn Bāǧǧa's Commentary."

97 See on this point Henry, "Aristotle on Animals," as well as Lloyd, "Aristotle on the natural sociability."

instruments. Ibn Bāǧǧa says that both of these states are blameworthy, one case representing the extreme of deficiency and the other the extreme of excess. He then outlines a third disposition, which is the mean between the two.

> Another disposition is that of one who watches over [his instruments] and preserves them only at the moment, not having need of them, and [who] gives them up and values them lightly at the time when he uses them, and who is not concerned about their use in what is required [of them], whether [the instruments] are destroyed or remain. The states of these [individuals] alone are commendable, and those who have obtained the mean between the two kinds have already obtained what is more beautiful from each part [i.e. the two extremes], and by so doing repelled what is worse in each.[98]

After highlighting this disposition, Ibn Bāǧǧa claims that the obtainment of the middle is the criterion by which one judges what is praiseworthy in one's actions, which again has been straightforwardly taken over from the *NE*.

He later relates this discussion of care for the body to a discussion of virtue by examining different ways one might be disposed toward one's body in times of distress. This discussion immediately follows a description of the relation between the mover and moved, in which Ibn Bāǧǧa offers the relation between an artisan and his instruments as an example.[99] Continuing this example, he explains that just as the artisan, who perfects the instruments of his craft, is not worried about using his instruments when he needs to, so too the first mover in the human being with the proper relationship to the body will not worry about using his body, which he perfects in order to bring it into a state of health that he continues to supervise.

> The existence of the [organs] in the most virtuous of their states is the existence of the body as having been corrected (*muṣaḥḥaḥan*), and the mastery of the vital instruments is soundness (*ṣiḥḥa*), and its supervision

98 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Risālat al-wadāʿ*, 93. There is a problem here with the manuscript. Asín Palacios tells us that that the first seven pages of the *Risālat al-wadāʿ* are missing in the Oxford manuscript, as a result of which he bases his own edition on the Berlin/Krakow manuscript. This passage occurs within those early pages, at the very bottom of one folio onto the top of the other. Since the Berlin/Krakow manuscript itself suffered water damage, the passage is obscured. In his new edition, Genequand repeats what is printed by Asín Palacios in his 1942 edition. See Asín Palacios, "Tratado de Avempace," 7 and 18. Ibn Bāǧǧa clearly refers back to the *al-mutawassiṭ* three lines later.

99 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Risālat al-wadāʿ*, 102. I examine this passage above on pp. 164–166.

> is the continuation of soundness. The acts of the mover regarding whatever it moves toward are its perfection, regardless of whether it results in its destruction or its staying intact.[100]

In fact, regardless of whether the body is kept in a sound state, it obtains its perfection, *kamāl*, whenever it follows the direction of its first mover. This relation is relevant in situations requiring courage, as Ibn Bāǧǧa explains.

> Clearer than that is the courageous [person's use of] his body, for he lays [his body] open to destruction completely, venturing in what is necessary and upon what is necessary in the moment necessary of noble actions. Something similar is necessary between the imagination and the concept. Let us now leave the imagination behind, because the human being has it insofar as he is an animal, its matter being not difficult for one who ponders it. So, the first mover here is the consideration, and that by which it moves is the striving. Its existence in a state of mastery is its existence as virtuous, its mastery being the virtue—I mean by, "the consideration," the correct consideration. So, an error of the consideration is rather only from the weakness of reason or its corruption. Analogous to this in the disciplines is the weakness of learning or its corruption.[101]

The re-introduction of the correct concept is a reference to the third example of relations in the list Ibn Bāǧǧa offered earlier in the *Epistle of Farewell*, and connects the virtue discussion directly to his noetics. The virtuous person who has complete control over the body and its instruments will be directed immediately by the correct concepts the individual has obtained, and this direction is so strong that, even if it leads to the destruction of the body, it *still* ensures the body's ultimate perfection. Since the body is under the complete control of the first mover as a purely instrumental servant, if the human being acts according to a correct concept of courage, and if this correct concept of courage leads to the death of this individual's body, the individual nevertheless would have acted correctly and to the ultimate perfection of this body. Even on the level of civic or moral virtue, we see the intense rationalism of Ibn Bāǧǧa's ethics. Wirmer's recent investigation of Ibn Bāǧǧa's understanding of habit and moral virtue, in connection to what he calls Ibn Bāǧǧa's intellectualism, whereby an individual alone is sufficient to attain philosophical perfection, confirm this

100 Ibn Bāǧǧa, 102.

101 Ibn Bāǧǧa, 102.

interpretation.[102] Moral virtue is only a preliminary we can do away with, something that is, in Wirmer's view, "a necessary yet transitory means" that is eventually worthless, specifically "once the higher intellectual perfection is attained: 'when the aims [ġāyāt] are attained one makes do without the preliminaries [tauṭi'āt]'," quoting here Ibn Bāǧǧa's *Epistle of Farewell*.[103] In relation to the point I am making here, Wirmer examines Ibn Bāǧǧa's account of habit, showing that habit, for Ibn Bāǧǧa, always refers to *bad* habit, such that habit is important only when it gets in the way.[104]

Although these moral virtues are a necessary step, their perfection is an endeavor distinct from the perfection of intellect. The moral virtues deal with the regulation and subordination of the striving power of the body and of imagination, and this striving, as we discussed above, is different than the striving connected to the rational power. Ibn Bāǧǧa makes this explicit: "It is clear that each one who strives for anything other than the completion of the theoretical power (*al-quwwa al-naẓariyya*) strives rather for finding something other than the best state, and is busied away from himself."[105] He describes the search one should undertake as follows: "The search for that [i.e. completion of the theoretical power] does not have a name, although its kinds are called learning, and deduction, and other such names."[106] Thus we here have an echo of Ibn Bāǧǧa's claim in the *Governance* that to be human is to become an intellect in its complete form.[107] Later in the *Epistle of Farewell*, Ibn Bāǧǧa discusses intellectual virtues as well. Interestingly, he divides them into two, distinguishing a *practical* sort of intellectual virtue. "The intellectual virtues are practical and theoretical. The practical [sort] are, in brief, trades and powers."[108] By trades he refers to everything that utilizes the body, e.g. carpentry, while by powers he refers to disciplines like medicine. The intellect in question here is that which Aristotle discusses in the sixth book of the *NE*, and thus refers to practical intellect and practical wisdom. He continues by turning to considering intellectual science and its connection to the human essence.

102 Wirmer, "Arabic Philosophy and the Art of Reading," 195. See also his *Vom Denken der Natur*, 93–95, esp. his claim on 93 that, "Ibn Bāǧǧa [begreift] die Theorie im Sinne des zehnten Buchs der *Nikomachischen Ethik* als vollständig autonome Tätigkeit."

103 Wirmer, "Arabic Philosophy and the Art of Reading," 195.

104 This conclusion is found at Wirmer, "Arabic Philosophy and the Art of Reading," 203, but the entire discussion is relevant, which is occurs on pp. 195–207.

105 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Risālat al-wadāʿ*, 103.

106 Ibn Bāǧǧa, 103.

107 See Wirmer, *Vom Denken der Natur*, 601–602.

108 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Risālat al-wadāʿ*, 112.

The intellect the human being attains is the goal that has also been the ultimate object of desire for the human being. For example, in the *Conjunction*, Ibn Bāǧǧa identifies the first mover of the human being as, "the actual intellect, that is, the actual intelligible object."[109] These intelligible objects the human being desires, and thus they function as the initial mover due to one's desire to know them.[110] Also at the very end of the *Epistle of Farewell*, he identifies explicitly the ultimate goal of the human being, since this end is what he passionately wants his addressee to attain, and for this attainment he wrote the *Epistle* in the first place: "In my soul is an intense desire (*tašawwuq šadīd*) for your partnership in the kind of concerns that are steadier and more necessary."[111] From here, he leads the reader to the goal of the rational soul, which is to reach the level of a simple intellect, removed from matter, without contrariety, and always one.[112] Ibn Bāǧǧa describes the attainment of this intellect as follows.

> The intellect is most loved by God, Powerful and Great, of existing things, and whenever the human being attains it, [he] is that intellect in itself, and there is no difference between the two in any way. So once that human being has attained that, [he] is most beloved of the created things to [God], and to the extent [one is] near to [the intellect], [one is] near to God, and God Exalted is pleased with him. And this is only by knowledge, so that knowledge is what allows one to draw near to God, and ignorance is what makes one be removed from him. The most noble knowledge generally is this knowledge that we discussed, and its greatest degree is this degree that is the human being's conceptualization of its essence, such that [he] conceptualizes that intellect that we indicated earlier.[113]

Here, Ibn Bāǧǧa identifies the acquired intellect as the goal of truly human endeavor, for through this acquisition does one become a simple intellect, which, as we saw above, he also identified as the goal in the *Governance*. Through attaining this intellect, one becomes what one has desired: complete perfection of the human essence. Becoming this intellect is further to be loved by God and to be divine, to have reached a stage that is without desire, and to

109 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Ittiṣāl*, 189; Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Conjunction*, 273.

110 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Ittiṣāl*, 189; Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Conjunction*, 273.

111 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Risālta al-wadāʿ*, 89–90.

112 Ibn Bāǧǧa, 117. See al-Maʿṣūmī, "Ibn Bāǧǧah on the Human Intellect," 125, for a comparison of Ibn Bāǧǧa's notion of *al-ʿaql al-mustifād* to that of earlier thinkers.

113 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Risālat al-wadāʿ*, 118.

have become most properly human. The desires of the human being, specifically the desire to know, ought to cease upon human perfection.

From the very beginning, we have seen that Ibn Bāǧǧa divides desire or striving, *nuzūʿ*, into three types, that which serves the preservation of the body, that which is directed toward a concept in the imagination, and that which is proper to the rational power alone. It is only the third type of desire that is human desire, the other two being common to animals. This properly human desire was developed and spurred by its connection to an object of reason. This threefold division Ibn Bāǧǧa takes over both from al-Fārābī's account of striving and its relation to the human being (leaving out the notion of the will), and from the accounts of desire found in the Arabic versions of the *DA*. It is a clear example of a non-inherent model of desire, an account within which desire is in need of a defined object, desire itself not proper in kind to any specific object, but instigated by concepts offered it from all levels of the human being. Since this striving stretches across all levels, Ibn Bāǧǧa discusses the role of striving in the function of the body's innate heat. There is, we found, a relation that extends from this ultimate instrument of the body to a concept in the imagination, one that is constituted by striving itself. This discussion connects directly to Ibn Bāǧǧa's objections to al-Ġazalī and the Sufis' claims to the realization of the ultimate goal. His basic criticism there is that the Sufis fail to reach the highest and properly human level of conception, instead remaining at the level of imagination and calling it the utmost achievement.

We also have had a glimpse of the culmination of true human endeavor: becoming one of the simple intellects through reaching the level of the acquired intellect. Thus, in what way desire relates to the *properly* human life is rather limited, since by the time one reaches this goal—intellecting simple substances as an intellect—desire is supposed to have ceased. For, as we saw in *Epistle of Farewell*, Ibn Bāǧǧa argues that the desire of the correct (*tašawwuq al-ṣawāb*), i.e. rational desire (*al-tašawwuq al-fikriyya*), is properly human. Further, it has become clear that the correct concepts are, ultimately, the simple intelligibles that the human being desires to know.[114] Thus, the bar for human activity is set very high, as anything below acquiring this intellect is, strictly-speaking, an animal activity. But even this most prestigious instance of desire, though it might be valuable as a functional part of the realization of the human end, is not permanent. As we learned from his remarks on natural, theoretical desire and his discussion on potency from the commentary on *GC*, if the human being operates properly as a human being, all desire will cease. Still,

114 Ibn Bāǧǧa, 101.

Ibn Bāǧǧa bestows great importance on desiring in general, since it is essential, loosely speaking, to the process of reaching human perfection, and since it operates on every level of the human being, even if it is only the human animal. The framework of motion, and desire along with it, is so important to our thinker because he is deeply concerned to give an account of human activity that operates on a complex structure of final causality. His discussion of the relation between the concept and desire, explicated also in terms of relations, is found in all of his major works, and, as we have seen, quite often in lesser-known, small treatises as well.

As a committed Aristotelian in the purest sense, Ibn Bāǧǧa has no account of the generation of the world, and thus there is no concept of the "return," since there is no place that one has left. There is not anything like the imitation and assimilation of which we read in Plotinus, the Arabic adaptation, and even in Avicenna's commentary, nor do we see different types of cognition involved in the attainment of truth, as we also saw in Avicenna's commentary. He is the first thinker we have examined at length for whom truth and truth attainment are logically structured, following, like al-Fārābī and Avicenna, the Aristotelian curriculum. However, these two points do not entail a lack of desire within Ibn Bāǧǧa's system, just as they do not entail a lack of desire within Aristotle's own account of reality. In the end, Plotinus's notion of the return is simply a remaking of Aristotle's account of final causality, with the addition of different metaphysical structure within which it operates. Ibn Bāǧǧa's account of human desire separates reason and desire and makes the striving soul subordinate to reason, insofar as even if the striving soul might be said to have an innate urge for the perpetual, it cannot direct itself toward any true instance of perpetuity, i.e. correct concepts, without reason's direction. The striving functions in the service of perfecting this very power, and in turn functions on a non-inherent model of human desire. The account of desire we have found throughout Ibn Bāǧǧa's text is the Andalusī backdrop against which one must set Ibn Ṭufayl's understanding of desire and its philosophical role. For outside of the eastern thinkers whom he identifies, Ibn Bāǧǧa is the only Andalusī philosopher Ibn Ṭufayl mentions by name as a direct interlocutor. Let us now turn to look at his story.

CHAPTER 5

# Ibn Ṭufayl: Situating *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān*

We arrive, at last, to Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān* (*Alive, Son of Vigilant*), the endpoint of this study. Ibn Ṭufayl was born in Guadix, and moved throughout the western Islamic world as doctor and philosophical companion to Almohad caliph Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf, and later to his son, Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb al-Manṣūr.[1] Ibn Ṭufayl was well favored by the former, and after his death, his son continued Ibn Ṭufayl's patronage until the latter's death in 581/1185. He thus worked in the succeeding administration to Ibn Bāǧǧa, an administration that was, theologically speaking, remarkably different.[2] Although the Almohads were indeed friendlier to philosophers and philosophy in general than the Almoravids, the philosophical inclinations of the ruling class were, to some extent, exaggerated medieval historiography.[3] For our purposes, the most germane difference between the Almoravids and the Almohads is the influence and legitimacy of al-Ġazālī and his ideas. Al-Ġazālī's theological positions were integral to the ideology of Almohad founder Ibn Tūmart, as opposed to the multiple fatwas issued during Almoravid rule recommending the burning of al-Ġazālī's theological masterpiece, the *Revival of the Religious Sciences* (*Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*).[4] As we will see throughout this chapter and the next, the two most important thinkers for Ibn Ṭufayl were Avicenna and al-Ġazālī, as he claims explicitly at the beginning of his text. Al-Ġazālī's centrality to Ibn Ṭufayl's work is, to some extent, a mark of his Almohadism, while his commitment to Avicenna is, for an Andalusī philosopher, unusual. In the previous chapter I briefly mentioned Avicenna's unpopularity in al-Andalus.[5] We found no engagement with Avicenna by Ibn Bāǧǧa at all, and that is not to mention Averroes's general dislike of Avicenna after Ibn Ṭufayl. As a result, it is, at first blush, unclear in what way Ibn Ṭufayl fits in with other Andalusīs with his love of Avicenna, as it is unclear in what way he fits with the other Aristotelians in general, given the Neoplatonic nature of his work. Further, given that there is no clear connection between

1 On Ibn Ṭufayl's political career, see Kukkonen, *Ibn Tufayl*, 7–16, and Conrad, "An Andalusian Physician."

2 For a thorough overview of the theological and political situation of Ibn Ṭufayl's time, see Fierro, "The Religious Policy of the Almohads," 679–692.

3 Stroumsa, *Andalus and Sefarad*, 135–147.

4 For an investigation of this situation, see Serrano Fuano "Why Did the Scholars of al-Andalus," 137–156.

5 See again Stroumsa, *Andalus and Sefarad*, 155–161.

Ibn Ṭufayl and any particular instance of Andalusī Neoplatonism, it is indeed difficult to place Ibn Ṭufayl with respect to his historical associates at all. While I will argue in the next chapter for the important role desire plays in his narrative, Ibn Ṭufayl's thought does not share any obvious features with, for example, the thought of Ibn Gabirol, in whose thought a Neoplatonic understanding of desire played an even more central role.[6]

Only one work by Ibn Ṭufayl survives in full, his *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān*. This literary masterpiece presents a philosophical allegory meant to communicate the truth, philosophical exercise, and a comprehensive vision of human potential. In brief, it portrays the life of its eponymous protagonist, Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān, who either spontaneously generates on or is sent as a baby in an ark to an uninhabited island, where he is adopted by a doe. The narrative follows him from his birth, through his intellectual development, to his highest spiritual achievement. It is bookended by a prologue and an epilogue, in which Ibn Ṭufayl explains his intention in writing the narrative, identifies his goals for the reader, and discusses his influences. It is a short text—just over 100 pages, rich, complex, controversial. The text demands caution and nuance, for Ibn Ṭufayl claims that the truth he aims to reveal is unspeakable. Thus, the exact nature of this truth is a topic of scholarly debate. One aspect of the text that, with two exceptions, has been hitherto underappreciated in the literature is the importance of desire within the text. Since working with this text presents unique difficulties, before we examine the topic of desire in *Ḥayy* in the next chapter, I want to lay some groundwork for approaching the text by examining the prologue and the first bit of the narrative frame. There are three points I will address: first, what Ibn Ṭufayl's own purpose was in writing his *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān*; the second, what his influences were in writing the text; and the third, the way in which he orients his reader to these influences by the unique dual beginning through which he situates his story. Since it is both a work of philosophy and an allegory, I take it as a basic interpretive principle that any study of *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān* must include consideration of the way in which one ought to read the narrative. For this reason, a literalist reading of the text is obviously impossible, but is nevertheless the way we as readers of philosophy tend to proceed. As will become clear below, I think one might be best served by approaching the narrative contained in *Ḥayy* in a similar way as one approaches a Platonic dialogue—with critical appreciation of the artistic quality that makes the text so delightfully engaging and careful attention to the goal and procedure of the author. Unlike Plato's dialogues, we

6 See Pessin, *Ibn Gabirol*, 15–20 and 29–36.

here have the added benefit of the prologue and epilogue in the author's own voice, and indeed Ibn Ṭufayl tells us quite a bit about his intentions and influences.

## 1 The Purpose and Methodology of the Text

Let us start by considering for what reasons Ibn Ṭufayl chose to author *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān*, since knowing the purpose of a narrative allegory will provide us some guidance in interpretation. In the prologue, he gives two different reasons for his composition of the text. On the one hand, he is responding to a request of a friend to articulate the secrets of eastern philosophy; and on the other, he is using the text to address his own concern about the political situation in al-Andalus. These two intentions are complementary, since he marshals his explication of eastern philosophy in order to address this political and intellectual reality, and ultimately the narrative structure of the text allows Ibn Ṭufayl to accomplish both of his aims at once: to espouse the secrets of eastern philosophy and to address his political concern. *Ḥayy* begins formulaically, with Ibn Ṭufayl writing, "You have asked me to unfold for you, as well as I am able, the secrets of the eastern philosophy (*al-ḥikma al-mašriqiyya*)."[7] The goal of this supposed eastern philosophy is the attainment of the highest level of truth, a level he claims finally to have reached upon reading his addressee's request. But further in the prologue, Ibn Ṭufayl raises another concern he has, namely, the damage he thinks is being done by individuals he does not name, but he refers to as "the ones claiming philosophy." He reiterates this concern in the epilogue, where he calls such an individual as a "pseudo-philosopher." In the former case, he mentions them while saying that he compared the views of Avicenna and al-Ġazālī to "the views that have sprung up in our era, so fervently admired by the ones claiming philosophy (*muntaḥilī l-falsifa*)."[8] In the latter, while speaking of his willingness to make clear the esoteric wisdom he portrays in *Ḥayy*, he claims, "What made it easy for me [to reveal glimpses of the truth] … was

7 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān*, 4. All references to *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān* are to the pagination of Gauthier, *Hayy ben Yaqdhân*. Unless explicitly specified, I offer Goodman's translation, almost always with modifications. Regarding *al-ḥikma al-mašriqiyya*, it is no secret this claim to expound so-called eastern philosophy has caused quite a stir in the last generation of scholarship on *Ḥayy*. Since this point has been discussed elsewhere and is not pivotal to my argument, I refer you only to Gutas's 1994 article, which settled the issue. More on this below.

8 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 18.

the great number of corrupt ideas that have sprouted up and are being openly spread by the pseudo-philosopher (*mutafalsifa*) of today, so widely have they covered the land and done universal damage."[9] In this latter passage, he is more explicit about the way in which he sees the text actually addressing this problem.

> Fearing that the weak-minded, who throw over the authority of the prophets to ape the way of fools, might mistake these notions for the esoteric doctrines which must be kept secret from those unfit to know them, and thus be all the more excited to embrace them, I decided to afford them a fleeting glimpse of the secret of secrets (*sirr al-asrār*) to draw them to the way of verification (*jānib al-taḥqīq*) and turn them away from this other, false way.[10]

Ibn Ṭufayl here sees the revelation of the truth he has depicted in the text, however partial, to be a tool for addressing the political or even spiritual crisis he thought had befallen the Maghrib. The revelation is supposed to attract mistaken individuals toward truth-based paths and away from false ones by giving them some of the esoteric knowledge they want, but no so much that it is harmful.

Ibn Ṭufayl's claim that he wants to espouse the heights of philosophical endeavor might seem uncontroversial. But there has been much disagreement on the meaning of this claim, since he chooses to express this intention through a promised espousal of Avicenna's eastern wisdom, which I will discuss below. The question Ibn Ṭufayl raises at the beginning of the text may be taken in two different ways, he tells us. The first is as a request for exactly what is witnessed by the person achieving a taste of this truth. Such communication, Ibn Ṭufayl claims, is impossible. The second interpretation is as a request for a discursive *introduction* to this taste of truth, and this sort of response is possible.[11] The fact that he can portray only a bit of this eastern wisdom also allows him to address the social problem without giving out too much information, the narrative thus addressing both of his aims at once. Although he is generally discussing the goals of the text in terms of Avicenna's eastern wisdom, he emphasizes that the experience in question is "rarer than red sulphur," a clear reference to al-Ġazālī's discussion in his *Jewels of the Qurʾān* (*Jawāhir al-Qurʾān*) where he

9 Ibn Ṭufayl, 155.
10 Ibn Ṭufayl, 156.
11 Ibn Ṭufayl, 11.

himself characterizes knowledge of the divine essence (*ḏāt al-ḥaqq*) as red sulphur.[12] Ibn Ṭufayl quotes both Avicenna and al-Ġazālī in the first few lines of the prologue, and at the end of the prologue, explains their role in his motivation for writing the text. He claims that, after spending much time studying and comparing the works of Avicenna and al-Ġazālī, "The truth became clear to me, first by the method of logical investigation and examination (*bi-ṭarīq al-baḥṯ wa-l-naẓar*), and then I achieved of it now this small taste by witnessing (*bi-l-mušāhada*)."[13] It is on account of this taste that he now wants to lay out a discourse in his name, which he wants the friend he addresses to be the first to read. Although he clearly intends for the reader to seek after a similar experience of witnessing, the ineffability of the truth demands a great commitment on the part of the reader and restraint on the part of Ibn Ṭufayl himself. He writes:

> Nonetheless, if I tell you of the highest levels I reached without first going over the preliminary steps that lead there, it would do you no more good than blind faith (*taqlīd*) as if you approved not because my words merit acceptance, but because we are friends.[14]

A good follower of al-Ġazālī, Ibn Ṭufayl will not abide blind faith, but demands that the reader go through the steps he himself completed. He concludes as follows.

> I want only to bring you along the paths in which I have preceded you and make you swim in the sea I have just crossed, so that it may bear you where it did me and that you experience something of what I experienced, and verify with the insight of your soul all that I have verified.[15]

He says, "I turn now to a small glimpse along the road of arousing desire (*al-tašwīq*) and urging upon the beginning of the path."[16] The following story of Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān, Absāl, and Salāmān is intended to take us to the road that

12 See al-Ġazālī, *Jawāhir al-Qur'ān*, 26, and *Jewels of the Qur'ān*, 25. This notion of *ḏāt al-ḥaqq* will be recurring through *Ḥayy*. Griffel notes that Ibn Ṭufayl's references to al-Ġazālī and his motif of the sea are so extensive that he says, "Ibn Ṭufayl almost mockingly alludes to it." See Griffel, *al-Ġazālī's Philosophical Theology*, 90.

13 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 18, my translation.

14 Ibn Ṭufayl, 18–19.

15 Ibn Ṭufayl, 19.

16 Ibn Ṭufayl, 20, my translation.

arouses desire for and urges us along the path of truth, this mention of desire leading to the beginning of the narrative. The truth the reader is supposed to desire is itself what is revealed in Avicenna's so-called eastern philosophy, and is also supposed to be familiar from al-Ġazālī. Let us take a broader look at Ibn Ṭufayl's predecessors.

## 2 Ibn Ṭufayl on His Influences

Ibn Ṭufayl discusses his predecessors and their work on different levels, and here I will try to restrict my investigation to those remarks by which he intends to define his own project. In general, he is largely dismissive of the philosophical accomplishments of previous thinkers of al-Andalus, and this rejection rests on the fact that they did not proceed beyond logic and rational investigation. In the previous chapter I discussed some political reasons for this practice, following Stroumsa's recent remarks that, in the first half of the 12th century, "stopping at logic was, apparently, a relatively safe way to do philosophy in the unpropitious Almoravid environment."[17] Ibn Ṭufayl presents Ibn Bāǧǧa alone has having reached any advanced level in philosophy, and explains his objections in philosophical detail in his case. He orients Ibn Bāǧǧa's thought in comparison to his own intentions with reference to eastern philosophy, even quoting part of Ibn Bāǧǧa's *Conjunction* to point out that what Ibn Bāǧǧa identified as the highest state is something different than the level that Ibn Ṭufayl himself identifies as his goal. He labels Ibn Bāǧǧa's level as that which one arrives at "by the path of theoretical science and cognitive understanding (*bi-ṭarīq al-ʿilm al-naẓarī wa-l-baḥṯ al-fikrī*)," something Ibn Ṭufayl clearly takes to be different to what he wants to express.[18] However, in characterizing the state he wishes to convey in *Ḥayy*, Ibn Ṭufayl says, "There is not uncovered in it an issue contrary to what was uncovered in this [theoretical path]."[19] Rather, the change is "by the addition of clarity and by witnessing it through something we only metaphorically label a power."[20] He extends this criticism later when he specifies the level Ibn Bāǧǧa reached, that is, "The state of the theorizers (*al-nāẓarīna*) who do not attain the level of friendship (*ṭawr al-wilāya*)." These thinkers are like the blind, who get to know the city of their birth through all channels of perception besides sight, such that they are

17 Stroumsa, *Al-Andalus and Sefarad*, 126.
18 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 5.
19 Ibn Ṭufayl, 5.
20 Ibn Ṭufayl, 5.

acquainted with it in every way, except by way of the color they cannot see. As a contrast to this condition, he describes those who attain the level of friendship by means of this metaphorical power.[21] Ibn Ṭufayl specifies that when he refers to the apprehension of the people of theoretical science (*idrāk ahl al-naẓar*), he does not mean the apprehension only of the natural world, but of the metaphysical as well. Necessarily, the exposition of this apprehension will lead to something true and sound (*ḥaqqan ṣaḥīḥan*), but the apprehension of the friends (*idrāk ahl al-wilāya*) leads to additional clarity and greater pleasure.[22]

The remaining discussion of Ibn Bāǧǧa constitutes Ibn Ṭufayl's scathing reply to Ibn Bāǧǧa's criticism of the Sufis and their delight at reaching what they claimed was the highest stage of realization. "Ibn Bāǧǧa censures [the Sufis] for the pursuit of this joy. He claimed it was owing to the power of imagination (*li-l-quwwa al-ḫayyāliyya*), and he promised that he would describe how it is necessary to [attain] the state of those who are happy after that, with an elucidating and clear account."[23] As we saw in the previous chapter, Ibn Bāǧǧa's criticism of the experience of the Sufis and al-Ġazālī was indeed that it rested in their imagination and failed to leave the world of sense experience. Ibn Ṭufayl retorts, "It is appropriate that it is said to him here—do not reject the flavor of something that you have not tasted, and do not step over the necks of the friends (*al-ṣadīqīna*)."[24] In addition to claiming that Ibn Bāǧǧa worked from a position of spiritual ignorance, he claims that Ibn Bāǧǧa in fact never fulfilled his promise to give an account of the state of happiness, suggesting that Ibn Bāǧǧa's travels and his decadent lifestyle might have kept him from doing so.[25] Besides his disapproval of Ibn Bāǧǧa's reproach of Sufi attainment and his own reproach of Ibn Bāǧǧa's lifestyle (which borders on personal attack), Ibn Ṭufayl points out (accurately) that this Andalusī predecessor also failed to *complete* his texts, highlighting that many of Ibn Bāǧǧa's text are incomplete, end suddenly, or are not polished, shortcomings that Ibn Bāǧǧa himself acknowledges. Some of Ibn Bāǧǧa's writings that Ibn Ṭufayl mentions are his writings on logic, and Ibn Ṭufayl invokes the connection we saw between Ibn Bāǧǧa and al-Fārābī in the previous chapter, namely, that both were heavily logical thinkers who structured their accounts of reality accordingly. Ibn Ṭufayl claims that most of the texts by al-Fārābī that have reached al-Andalus were themselves on logic, while

21 Ibn Ṭufayl, 8–9.
22 Ibn Ṭufayl, 9.
23 Ibn Ṭufayl, 10.
24 Ibn Ṭufayl, 10.
25 Ibn Ṭufayl, 10.

saying that those that were on philosophy had many doubts, here referring to al-Fārābī's position on the survival of the soul after the death of body.[26] Ibn Ṭufayl claims that what Ibn Bāğğa did not attain in his theoretical endeavors and what al-Fārābī failed to do in his non-logical works, he himself will accomplish by aligning his thought with that of Avicenna and al-Ġazālī. He clearly thought that no work of this kind had either reached or thus far been accomplished in al-Andalus.

> Do not believe that the philosophy that has reached us from the books of Aristotle and al-Fārābī and in the *Šifā'* are sufficient for this goal that you want, nor that [there is any] one of the books from the people of al-Andalus in which [these] things are sufficient.[27]

What follows is his explanation of the reason one will not find an introduction to eastern philosophy elsewhere, and therefore the reason Ibn Ṭufayl felt compelled to commit his own views on the topic to writing. For this reason, he said, "Do not believe that the philosophy that has reached us from the books of Aristotle and al-Fārābī and in the *Šifā'* are sufficient for this goal."[28] In turn, Ibn Ṭufayl offers an interpretation of the philosophical concepts he found relevant to the question at hand, and he overviews texts available to him and al-Andalus by al-Fārābī, Avicenna, al-Ġazālī, and Ibn Bāğğa. According to Ibn Ṭufayl, the eastern philosophy he intends to expound is identical to Avicenna's own eastern wisdom, *al-ḥikma al-mašriqiyya*. Thus, Ibn Ṭufayl seeks to lay out a philosophical project that he sees as influenced strongly by Avicenna, but which, as I will make clear in a moment, one may not read as being truly Avicennan. Throughout this chapter and the next, I will highlight Ibn Ṭufayl's commitment to both Avicenna and al-Ġazālī, but even the opening passages exemplify this dual commitment. After identifying his philosophical project as Avicennan, Ibn Ṭufayl goes on to quote famous Sufis such as al-Hallāğ and al-Bistāmī, including the same three quotations al-Ġazālī includes in the *Niche of Lights* (*Miškāt al-Anwār*) in his own discussion and explanation of the highest experience of the gnostic.[29] As I mentioned above, Ibn Ṭufayl attempts to specify the

---

26 Apparently a touchy subject in al-Andalus. See again Ibn Bāğğa's defense of al-Fārābī in *On political happiness and happiness of the hereafter*, edited and translated as *Über die diesseitige und die jenseitige Glückseligkeit* in *Über das Ziel des menschlichen Lebens*.

27 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 12–13.

28 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 11–12.

29 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 4, and al-Ġazālī, *The Niche of Lights*, 17–18. For discussion of Ibn Ṭufayl's use of the *Miškat* see Radtke, "How Can Man Reach the Mystical Union?" 165–194, esp. 178–181.

kind of experience he intends to convey in his text, by using as a contrast case Ibn Bāǧǧa's account of conjunction, describing it as the rationalist's experience (*idrāk ahl al-naẓar*). Ibn Ṭufayl contrasts this experience and goal with his own, calling it the state of friendship (*ṭawr al-wilāya*).[30] Although the content of the two experiences is the same, there are two changes, "The daybreak on a new visual world," and "great joy."[31] He explicitly critiques Ibn Bāǧǧa for failing to go beyond the way of theoretical speculation, *naẓar*, as well as for Ibn Bāǧǧa's censure of the Sufis in his *Conjunction*.[32]

As I have noted, Ibn Ṭufayl includes quotations from al-Hallāǧ and al-Bistāmī that al-Ġazālī uses elsewhere. Ibn Ṭufayl cites these three exclamations ("Praise be to me, great am I!", "I am the Truth!", "There is within this robe nothing but God!") as examples of the fact that no one who experiences such a sublime state is capable of keeping it a secret. Insofar as Ibn Ṭufayl tells the reader that he himself just had such an experience, his own compulsion to write down his experience at the moment he did, namely, just after having experienced this state, is clearly analogous to the Sufis he quotes. He cites, in alignment with the sayings of al-Hallāǧ and al-Bistāmī, al-Ġazālī's line from his *Deliverance* which says, "It was what it was, something of what [it was], I cannot mention."[33] In the previous chapter, we saw that Ibn Bāǧǧa highlighted and targeted this claim for criticism in multiple works, and his chastisement of the Sufis was coupled in places with his distaste for al-Ġazālī. It is possibly their disagreement on this figure that most explicitly reveals the rift between Ibn Bāǧǧa and Ibn Ṭufayl, especially since it highlights the divergence in their conceptions of the nature of reality and truth attainment. Although his thought was restored by Ibn Tūmart's discipleship, al-Ġazālī was not wholly embraced in al-Andalus, and remained a problematic figure.[34] Since one would not imagine that there was relevant animosity toward the *Revival of the Religious Sciences* when Ibn Ṭufayl wrote, the absence of any mention of the text in the prologue is conspicuous, since one familiar with the *Revival* will notice its influence on *Ḥayy*, which I myself will highlight in the following chapter. Perhaps Ibn Ṭufayl did not consider it a possible candidate for portraying the idea he wants to portray, or perhaps, in the end, the *Revival* was not completely free of acrimony.

30 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 9.

31 Ibn Ṭufayl, 9.

32 Ibn Ṭufayl, 10. For a comparison of Ibn Ṭufayl's own conception of contemplation in contrast to *EN* X, see Germann, "Philosophizing without Philosophy?" 285–289.

33 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 4.

34 With this remark I am of course thinking of Averroes's own complicated relationship with al-Ġazālī, which itself was not wholly negative.

One group that Ibn Ṭufayl does not connect himself to or mention in his text is the Maghribī mystic tradition characterized by Ibn Barrağān. Nevertheless, al-Ġazālī's popularity in al-Andalus, as well as to the supposition by many modern scholars that mystics such as Ibn Barrağān—the so-called "al-Ġazālī of the West"—were indebted to al-Ġazālī's thought, raises the question of whether there may be a connection between that mystical tradition and Ibn Ṭufayl's own project, if only forged by a mutual indebtedness to al-Ġazālī. For example, Ali Humayun Akhtar has recently suggested that Ibn Ṭufayl added a mystic element to his interpretation of Avicenna in order to represent the latter as a Sufi, and that Ibn Ṭufayl's approach was similar to philosophically-inclined "Sufis" like Ibn Barrağān, for whom al-Ġazālī's metaphysics was central and a channel of Graeco-Arabic philosophical thought.[35] Surely he is right in his claim about Ibn Ṭufayl's relationship to Avicenna and al-Ġazālī. However, the connection between Ibn Ṭufayl and Ibn Barrağān on the ground of the supposed use of al-Ġazālī is extremely doubtful. Yousef Casewit has shown conclusively that Ibn Barrağān, who did *not* identify as a Sufi, was neither in any significant way influenced by al-Ġazālī nor even introduced to al-Ġazālī's texts until late in his life. Ibn Barrağān refers to the Sufis as a distinct group, and refers his students to them on topics such as extreme asceticism, a practice of which Ibn Barrağān himself did not totally approve.[36] Further, my own explorations of the work of Ibn Barrağān yielded no obvious similarities to the thought we find in *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān*. To the contrary, it seems to me that Ibn Ṭufayl stands in a lineage distinct from figures like Ibn Barrağān, and that insofar as he sees himself as heir to Avicenna and al-Ġazālī—the Mashriq—, he is doing something quite different from those thinkers. Indeed, he may very well be targeting them with his charge of pseudo-philosophy, especially since he also sees himself as the first "true" philosopher in al-Andalus. This distance extends to those like Ibn Masarra. Although Ibn Ṭufayl and Ibn Masarra share, for example, a general Neoplatonism, we do not find in Ibn Ṭufayl's work the explicit themes from Ibn Masarra that are readily available in, for example, Muḥyīddīn Ibn al-ʿArabī.[37] In fact, Ibn Ṭufayl's self-appraisal as a sort of outsider may have been specifically

35 See Akhtar, *Philosophers, Sufis, and Caliphs*, 214–215.

36 Casewit, *The Mystics of al-Andalus*, 57–90. Abū Madyan is the first explicit touchpoint for Sufism per se in al-Andalus: "Abū Madyan thus marks the beginning of a self-consciously Sufi movement in the Muslim West," Casewit, *Mystics of al-Andalus*, 88.

37 This is against the conclusions by Stroumsa and Sviri that Ibn Ṭufayl's work is heavily influenced by Ibn Masarra, in spite of the infrequent occurrence of *iʿtibār* in Ibn Ṭufal's *Ḥayy*, at Stroumsa and Sviri, "The beginnings of mystical philosophy," 230. The overlaps between the thought of Ibn Masarra and Ibn Ṭufayl that they mention are, to my mind, accounted for by Neoplatonism generally (and thus ultimately by shared sources),

*because* he did not see himself as part of the mystical or philosophical lines that were available. Further, his decision to follow Avicenna (whom he saw as an extension of Aristotle) and al-Ġazālī together may have further alienated him from, effectively, everyone.

This conclusion supports, from another perspective, Vincent Cornell's conclusions on the "Sufism" of Ibn Ṭufayl.[38] While Cornell convincing connects several doctrinal similarities between Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy* and at least one Berber ascetic within the Nūriyya tradition, he concluded that this connection is only tentative and that regardless Ibn Ṭufayl was "out of step" with the intellectual and mystic schools of his time.[39] All of this must also be kept in check with Ibn Ṭufayl's clear intention to connect himself and his thought to the philosophers and Sufis of the East. Bernd Radtke examined Ibn Ṭufayl's use Sufi terminology and concepts, especially those describing the ultimate experience Ibn Ṭufayl aims to portray, comparing his thought to the earlier Sufis with whom he aligned himself at the beginning of his prologue. Radtke concludes that Ibn Ṭufayl's worldview, especially his emanationism, distinguishes him from the Sufis whom he claimed as his affiliates. To quote Radtke, "He adopts their terminology, but not their system."[40] The conclusions of Cornell and Radtke provide the parallel insights that our author stood distinct from both his Andalusī predecessors, with whom he did not align himself, and his eastern predecessors, with whom he did align himself. Moving in the other historical direction, Radtke suggests that Ibn Ṭufayl may rather be understood as ancestor of the later tradition initiated by Ibn al-ʿArabī.[41] Thus, rather than identifying unacknowledged Andalusī influences on our author, I think it is sounder to connect his thinking to those whose ideas he himself claims to use: Avicenna and al-Ġazālī. This is not to say that there are no thematic similarities. But insofar as we want to trace concepts and lines of influence, sticking to what Ibn Ṭufayl himself tells us yields, I think, more fruitful results.

As for his own report on his influences, he connects his own thought to Avicenna, who he identifies as the true expositor of Aristotle's philosophy.[42] Insofar as Ibn Ṭufayl takes himself to be the one who reveals Avicenna's own

---

and need not be traced to the tradition of Ibn Masarra specifically. See reference to Ibn Ṭufayl at Stroumsa and Sviri, "The beginnings of mystical philosophy," 211, 230, and 234–235.

38 Cornell, "Ḥayy in the Land of Absāl," 133–164.

39 Cornell, 158–162 and 163–164, respectively.

40 Radtke, "How Can Man Reach Mystical Union?" 194.

41 Radtke, 194.

42 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 14–15.

thought, his connection of Avicenna to Aristotle reveals the basic level at which Ibn Ṭufayl takes himself to be standing in an eastern tradition. He identifies Avicenna to the philosophical and spiritual goal he has in mind, describing Avicenna's account of the attainment of the highest level as follows: "Now these states, as Avicenna describes them, are reached not by theorizing, syllogistic deductions, postulating premises and drawing inferences, but solely by intuition."[43] This claim is consonant with Ibn Ṭufayl's later claim that one does not find Avicenna's true philosophical theory in the *Healing*, but only in his work on eastern philosophy. Gutas has long shown that Ibn Ṭufayl, while indeed quoting the preface of the *Healing*, misconstrues what Avicenna said and meant when he refers readers to his book on eastern philosophy, in part by being selective about which parts of Avicenna's claim he included, and in part due to a genuine lack of information on the part of Ibn Ṭufayl.[44] Most significantly, Ibn Ṭufayl represents Avicenna's eastern philosophy as something secret, which must be carefully revealed to the reader.[45] He is nevertheless liberal in his portrayal of what Avicenna *meant* in the text that Ibn Ṭufayl quotes from the former's *Pointers and Reminders* (*al-Išārāt wa-l-tanbihāt*), and attributes to the one Avicenna describes a level of knowledge higher than that attained by rational activity alone, something it is not at all clear Avicenna would have conceded.[46] Still, in chapter two we saw an Avicennan distinction that might seem somewhat similar: the distinction between apprehension and true witnessing in Avicenna's commentary on the *ThA*. As far as I know, Ibn Ṭufayl did not have these notes, and furthermore, Avicenna's point there, as I highlighted in the second chapter, is not that true witnessing is a different sort of intellection that supersedes logic. As Gutas argued, true witnessing is rather more fully developed intellection that nonetheless relies on the logical structuring of the truth being witnessed. Although Ibn Ṭufayl did not have the notes on the *ThA*, he did have Avicenna's *Pointers and Reminders*, and, as Gutas also highlighted in his discussion of the concept of witnessing, there is mention in this text of the "people of witnessing" (*ahl al-mušāhada*). This witnessing is contrasted with a less sophisticated level

43 Ibn Ṭufayl, 7.

44 Gutas, "Ibn Ṭufayl," 228–230. However, see Kukkonen's lucid response, in which he highlights that Ibn Ṭufayl's characterization of Avicenna's philosophy, specifically on the notion of intuition, may simply reflect Avicenna's own shifting account, in Kukkonen, "Ibn Ṭufayl and the Wisdom of the East," 92–93.

45 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 4; Gutas, "Ibn Ṭufayl," 230.

46 Gutas has argued for a complete lack of mysticism in Avicenna. See Gutas, "Intellect Without Limits," especially his examination of the relation between intellectual apprehension and direct witnessing on pp. 367–371. See also Adamson, "Non-Discursive Thought," 87–111.

of thinking.[47] This contrast might have encouraged Ibn Ṭufayl in his interpretive proclivities, for he surely utilizes the contrast, whatever it may have originally indicated, to differentiate between his and Ibn Bāǧǧa's philosophical achievements. Ibn Ṭufayl's support of both al-Ġazālī and Sufi achievement solidifies the difference between Ibn Bāǧǧa and himself as he saw it: they disagreed about the very structure of truth, and thus, ultimately, about the way in which one might come to attain it. As a result, there will be no logical endeavor as part of Ḥayy's education, nor does Ibn Ṭufayl mention it in the entirety of the text except in his assessment (and dismissal) of Ibn Bāǧǧa and al-Fārābī. His refusal to acknowledge logic as integral to the structure of reality or constitutive of the highest level of thought lays the groundwork for the type of desire that we will find within his philosophical allegory: fundamental to who we are, endless, and connected to the Good in kind. His combination of Avicenna and al-Ġazālī—and specifically his flagrant alteration of Avicenna—provides him the tools he needs to reconfigure reality outside the bounds of logical structure and definition. Since these two thinkers further form the basis for orienting the reader to the text, we find at the beginning of the text that Ibn Ṭufayl indeed undertakes such a reconfiguration to set up Ḥayy's birth and existence on the island where we join him.

## 3 Origins and Orientation

Before he begins the chronicle of Ḥayy's life, Ibn Ṭufayl must account for the way in which Ḥayy comes to be on an island by himself in the first place. By orienting Ḥayy to the island, Ibn Ṭufayl in turn orients the readers to his story, a continuation of his efforts in the prologue. Here at the beginning, Ibn Ṭufayl offers a perplexing account of Ḥayy's origin, namely, by offering two competing accounts of the way in which the boy comes to be on this "certain equatorial island, lying off the coast of India."[48] Many have written extensive explications of these two accounts, and I will not reproduce them here.[49] What I want to examine instead is the way in which these accounts relate to the rest of the text,

47 Avicenna, *al-Išārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, 364. Germann has noticed the same similarity. See her "Philosophizing without Philosophy?" 295fn64.

48 On Ibn Ṭufayl's use of the uninhabited island motif, see Kukkonen, "No Man Is an Island," 187–204; De Callataÿ, "The Two Islands Allegory," 71–81; and De Callataÿ, "Did the Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'," 82–89.

49 Bashier, *The Story of Islamic Philosophy*, 43–66; Kukkonen, *Ibn Ṭufayl*, 34–39; Adamson, "A False Start? The Two Beginnings of Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān*," (forthcoming).

specifically whether Ibn Ṭufayl intends the accounts to be equal, or whether he intends one rather than the other to be, as it were, the real account. In what follows, I will argue that Ibn Ṭufayl intends the two accounts to be representative of his two main influences, Avicenna and al-Ġazālī, and in turn to be equally valid alternatives.

The beginning of the narrative of *Ḥayy* is unusual. After geographically situating the island on which Ḥayy will grow up and on which almost all of the narrative will take place, Ibn Ṭufayl tells us two stories. Each is supposed to give us a sufficient account of how exactly Ḥayy came to be on the uninhabited island. In brief, one account explains Ḥayy's existence on the island as an infant castaway.[50] Ibn Ṭufayl relates the tale of a woman, who is sister to a jealously possessive king, and, due to her brother's possessiveness, secretly marries the man she loves named Yaqẓān. They have a child they name Ḥayy, and, when she fears her brother's wrath upon her child, she puts him into an ark (*tābūt*) and, like Moses, sends him out on the water under God's protection, from which he arrives to the shores of the uninhabited island. This account Salman Bashier refers to as the traditionalist account. The other account describes Ḥayy's generation as coming about through an act of spontaneous generation. Indeed, Ibn Ṭufayl goes into detail, offering a general scientific account of spontaneous generation, and arguing on what grounds it might have occurred on the island in question.[51] Citing Avicenna as an expert and source for this theory, on account of the uninhabited island's excellent position, a bubble forms in the earth to which God imparts a spirit, and from which eventually an infant is born.[52] This account Bashier calls the naturalist account. (For clarity and ease, I use these two terms throughout.) Although, as an interpreter of the text, it is already difficult to bracket the fact that Ibn Ṭufayl gives us *two* stories of how Ḥayy came to be, a bigger problem is that he tells us both stories at once. This simultaneity makes interpreting them even more challenging, as it reveals something about Ibn Ṭufayl's intentions (what those intentions are is, of course, the problem). His narrative about Ḥayy's origins is generally understood to proceed as follows. Ibn Ṭufayl begins with the naturalist account, which is interrupted by the traditionalist account, after which he completes the naturalist account. On this understanding the naturalist account bookends the traditionalist account, as if Ibn Ṭufayl senses halfway through that he would lose less scientifically-inclined readers and threw them a more digestible account, before continuing with

50 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 24–25.

51 Ibn Ṭufayl, 21–24.

52 For a thorough analysis of this point, see Kruk, "A Frothy Bubble," 265–282. Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 21.

the scientific account. However, the storyline that ostensibly begins the naturalist account actually gives us information only about the island on which such generation will be said to happen—we are told nothing about spontaneous generation proper there, only that the island itself was perfectly suited for such a thing to happen and the reasons for its suitability.[53] The description of the location of the island is interrupted by the traditionalist account, but again, Ibn Ṭufayl first accounts for the island on which the baby is born before beginning the account of his birth. So the order is (1) island of on which Ḥayy grows up (and why it is well suited for spontaneous generation), (2) island on which Ḥayy is born according to the traditionalist account, (3) traditionalist account of Ḥayy's birth, and (4) naturalist account of Ḥayy's birth.[54] It is possible that by ordering the information in this way, Ibn Ṭufayl intends to frustrate any attempt to privilege one account of Ḥayy's birth over the other. In fact, one of the most (surprisingly) difficult details of the story proves to be little Ḥayy's ark. Although introduced only in the traditionalist origin account, it appears again *after* Ibn Ṭufayl has said the two stories merge. Why include the ark, when it is disharmonious with the naturalist account? Is this an indication that the traditionalist account is the true one? Supposing that Ibn Ṭufayl might intend to thwart attempts at relegating one account to an inferior position, the detail of the ark may be read as another purposive frustration, just like the interspersed origin stories it directly follows.

Ibn Ṭufayl's ostensible narrative motivation for offering *two* accounts of Ḥayy's origin is that people disagree about the way in which he came into being. Since he expects some people will not accept the account according to spontaneous generation, Ibn Ṭufayl offers the so-called traditionalist account as an alternative. Either way, he intends that once Ḥayy is on the uninhabited island—whether by popping out of the earth or arriving in an ark—the two stories are supposed to coincide, such that anything that may be said for one may be said for the other. Bashier highlights more precisely that the two accounts merge "with the first cry of the newborn."[55] After Ḥayy cries, he is adopted by a doe looking for her lost fawn, and the story takes off. It is not obvious how much distinct influence the two different origin stories are meant to have: Ibn Ṭufayl may intend them to be relevant only for the account of Ḥayy's origin, *or*

53 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 20–24.

54 As far as I know, no one has accounted for the progression in this way. One wonders the extent to which the assumption that the account of Ḥayy's spontaneous generation both comes first and is interrupted has buttressed the impression that Ibn Ṭufayl found this account the true one.

55 Bashier, *The Story of Islamic Philosophy*, 46.

he may see each of them as coloring the ensuing story differently than the other. For example, one who is inclined to believe the traditionalist account may be moved by the Quranic and religious symbolism, such as Quranic verses, images, and ways of talking about God found throughout the narrative.[56] By contrast, one who believes the naturalist account may follow more closely Ḥayy's scientific endeavors, such as the two different accounts of the generation of the universe. Although I will argue that Ibn Ṭufayl intends the philosophical and religious aspects of the texts to merge, my suspicion is that these two competing approaches to the text also allow those who are not philosophically or scientifically educated to engage with and benefit from the text. This approach would be consistent with Ibn Ṭufayl's methodology for engaging with the various levels of philosophical education in his readership. Nevertheless, although we have good reason to see the different storylines as introducing opportunities for readers of different capacities to engage with the text, I do not think we are entitled to reduce either storyline to such an opportunity. Indeed, even though the traditionalist account is more palatable for the layperson, the symbolism therein comes from al-Ġazālī and has layered meanings, as I will discuss below and in the following chapter.

But what does each of these two stories really represent? Hawi interpreted them in such a way that the account according to spontaneous generation is the true account, inserting the traditionalist account as a safeguard against readers hostile to philosophy.[57] Bashier critiques this interpretation, instead arguing that the naturalistic interpretation shows the importance of balance and equilibrium in the creation of human beings, while arguing that in the traditionalist account Ibn Ṭufayl shows us what is needful after the development of society to attain a different kind of balance and equilibrium: "There is need for a new beginning to regain balance and to reestablish the broken harmony."[58] Kukkonen interprets the first account as a naturalist one, and the real one, according to which the rest of the story proceeds. He claims the second story "is merely an entertaining diversion, something that could conceivably have happened and might plausibly account for Ḥayy's presence on the island, but nothing more than that."[59]

Most recently, Adamson has argued that the account according to spontaneous generation, which he calls the Aristotelian account, is the "privileged" account, although he concludes that we ought to interpret the two accounts

56 On this point, see Conrad, "Through the Thin Veil," 260–261.

57 Hawi, *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism*, 103–123.

58 Bashier, *The Story of Islamic Philosophy*, 97–98.

59 Kukkonen, *Ibn Ṭufayl*, 39.

simply as aimed at different audiences, one philosophical and the other religious.[60] His argument is that the first account proceeds in the manner of the rest of the story, namely, according to Avicennan science, and is thus supported both by that very science and its internal coherence with the rest of the story. The argument from internal coherence further supports such adjudication with respect to the question of divine power. Adamson argues the account of providence we find in the rest of the story is consonant more with the naturalist account of Ḥayy's birth than the traditionalist: according to the first account, divine power or providence is universal, while according to the second account it is particular.[61] His argument for the inclusion of the second account at all is that it will be believed by some people, namely, those who *need* an allegorical interpretation, and that is has a specific internal purpose insofar as it connects to the inhabited island that surfaces at the end of the text. Specifically, he argues that the second island from the traditionalist account of Ḥayy's birth and the second island at the end of the story are the same, and therefore that we ought to see the two plot points as essentially connected. Since the second island is full of people who are unable to see the truth in a sophisticated way, we ought to understand the second version of Ḥayy's birth to be aimed at people with such limited understanding.[62] As I will argue below, Ibn Ṭufayl presents within the narrative of the text a model within which the religious and scientific (Ġazālian and Avicennan) are blended, and he takes aspects from each in order to reach what he considered to be an accurate model of philosophical engagement. I will argue against this interpretation of the origin stories by showing that there Ġazālian aspects of the narrative that are as central and crucial as the Avicennan aspects. If the two origin stories are connected to Avicenna and al-Ġazālī, and the Avicennan and Ġazālian aspects of the narrative are equally integral, an argument from internal coherence requires us to acknowledge both origins stories as equal.

Broadly speaking, I think Adamson has the general timbre of the two accounts correct: the first is philosophical, and the second rife with religious symbolism. One of the most illuminating things he does is to show that the traditionalist origin story signals a connection to the second island that surfaces toward the end of the text.[63] Even though it is not absolutely clear that the island of the traditionalist account and that at the end of the text are one

60 Adamson, "Beginnings," forthcoming. For the first claim, see pp. 6–10, and for the second see pp. 12–13.

61 Adamson, 5–6.

62 Adamson, 10.

63 Adamson, 3, 11.

and the same, I am convinced that we ought to see a political concern in the background of *Ḥayy*, and that the traditionalist account of Ḥayy's birth signals that what follows would be somehow pertinent to society and its ills. The goal in sending Ḥayy away from the island of his birth may not be to free him from society *simpliciter*, but to get him to a place where Ibn Ṭufayl could freely compose a sort of society ex nihilo. Such freedom allowed Ibn Ṭufayl to construct Ḥayy's environment in whatever way he saw fit, which I discuss in detail below.

However, there is further reason to doubt that Ibn Ṭufayl intended the scope of the second account to be limited, or that he thought it less sophisticated than the first account. First, the fact that the naturalist account is obviously Avicennan should call to our attention the possibility that the other account is dedicated to a different figure, and we could do worse than suspect the second of Ibn Ṭufayl's claimed philosophical masters, al-Ġazālī. There are at least two reasons we should suppose the second account is Ġazālian. First, let us recall Ibn Ṭufayl's description of his intention he offers at the end of the prologue. There he says that he is leading us so that we might swim in the sea (*fī l-baḥr*) he had just crossed. There is obvious parallel between this intention and the traditionalist account, where Ḥayy's mother takes him down to the sea (*al-baḥr*) and then throws him into it (*qaḏafat bi-hī fī l-yamm*, an obvious reference to the 20:39 account of Moses's relinquishment, where his mother is told *fa-iqḏīfīhī fī l-yamm*), which begins the journey toward knowledge and awareness, eventually of God. We should also recall the fact that al-Ġazālī implores the reader in his *Jewels of the Qurʾān* that they dive into the sea (*al-baḥr*), explore the islands, and learn from their animals. Indeed, Ḥayy quite literally does all of this: he is thrown into the sea by his mother (on the traditionalist account), grows up on an island, and learns from deer (and other animals).[64] He enjoins the reader to emulate those before them who have searched, and who "became attached their islands (*taʿallaqū ʾilā jazāʾirihā*) and derived from their animals the greatest antidote and the strongest musk" (by which he means the red sulphur, knowledge of divine essence).[65] Both the sea imagery and the connection to animals resonate with al-Ġazālī. The notion of attachment, *taʿalluq*, will also be crucial to Ḥayy's development, as I will discuss in the next chapter.

Second, we ought to consider that the mother's faith in God in the traditionalist version resonates with al-Ġazālī's account of the highest level of trust in God, *tawakkul*, a level of trust that he likens to the comportment of a corpse in the hands of its washers.[66] Goodman notices this allusion in Ḥayy's mother's

64 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 33–34. The deer are indeed the first objects of imitation for Ḥayy.

65 al-Ġazālī, *Jawāhir al-Qurʾān*, 21–22; al-Ġazālī, *The Jewels of the Qurʾān*, 19–20.

66 al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, 2513.

renunciation of Ḥayy to the sea and God's protection.[67] Further consideration of al-Ġazālī's discussion of trust in divine care in *Book on Divine Unity and Trust in Divine Providence* (*Kitāb al-tawhid wa-l-tawakkul*), book 35 of the *Revival*, reminds us that the *second* level of faith in God is likened to a child's faith in his mother (*ka-ḥāl al-ṭifl maʿa ʾummihī*), who "whenever he sees her, in every situation he hangs onto (*taʿallaqa*) the hem of her skirt."[68] Ibn Ṭufayl will later represent this level of trust in God in his depiction of Ḥayy's trust in and devotion to his adoptive doe mother who suckles him.[69] Al-Ġazālī's example alludes to a depiction of God as a mother, such that separation from God is similar in experience to separation from or loss of a mother. This motif of the mother, and specifically the journey toward understanding that her loss incites, is something that Ḥayy's human and non-human mothers have in common: Loss of the one (his biological mother in the narrative account) is symbolic of Ḥayy's journey on the sea of knowledge. Loss of the other (his adoptive doe mother), as we will see, instigates a certain desire on Ḥayy's part, and begins his journey to self-understanding and awareness of God. Further, and fundamentally important to this study, is that the traditionalist account lays out that there is a crucial connection between Ḥayy, his journey toward the truth, and the mother figure. And, as I will argue below, Ibn Ṭufayl depicts Ḥayy's education in such a way that his connection to the doe is pivotal. The traditionalist account anticipates this point, highlighting the necessity of loss for Ḥayy's journey.

Given that Ibn Ṭufayl himself identifies the naturalist account of Ḥayy's birth as Avicennan, I think what Ibn Ṭufayl does, in the end, is offer two origin stories, each of which follows a line Avicennan or Ġazālian. Such a stratagem, I think, aims at the following results. First, it emphasizes Ibn Ṭufayl's own indebtedness to each thinker, insofar as these two were most important for his philosophical development and conclusions, as he explicitly states in the prologue. Second, it affords Ibn Ṭufayl a broad and varied range of philosophical tools and analyses to which readers can relate. And third, it illustrates Ibn Ṭufayl's own position on al-Ġazālī's potential conciliation to Avicennan philosophy, namely, he seems to find such reconciliation both possible and necessary. In addition to the ori-

67 Goodman, *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān*, 189fn73.

68 Al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 2513, my translation.

69 We find a parallel in Ibn al-ʿArabī's discussion of Moses's salvation from the ark in the Ringstone of Moses. There, Ibn al-ʿArabī argues that, "In reality one's mother is she who suckles him, not she who gives birth to him. The birth-mother bears him as a trust, and he is formed within her and feeds on her menstrual blood, this taking place without any desire on her part, so much so that there is no free-giving on her part … Suckling is not like this, for by breast-feeding her intention is for him to have life and be sustained." From *The Ringstones of Wisdom*, 259.

gin account, I think that Ibn Ṭufayl's inclusion of Ġazālian thought into the heart of his philosophical picture (for which I will argue further in the next chapter) requires interpreters of *Ḥayy* to refrain from reading the text in a way that privileges—or even more—reduces what is valuable and central in *Ḥayy* to intellectual investigation and scientific inquiry. Undoubtedly, there is a serious inclination in contemporary scholarship on *Ḥayy* to do just this, in large part in an attempt to show that the text must be taken seriously as a work of philosophy. But my goal is to show that the text becomes even richer, and hopefully more coherent, if we offer a seat at the proverbial table to all aspects of the text. Thus, I will push against this tendency, not in order to reject it, but in an effort to offer what I see as a complementary reading of *Ḥayy*.

So far, Ibn Ṭufayl has presented his *Ḥayy* as an answer to two questions: first, as an explanation or indication of Avicenna's so-called "eastern wisdom"; second, as a solution to a problem of pseudo-philosophy that on his account plagued al-Andalus. It is unclear, of course, whom he refers to with this title. Nevertheless, in the preface he tells us that he composed the text after comparing Avicenna and al-Ġazālī, and I have argued that he uses both straightaway by beginning the narrative with dual origin stories for Ḥayy, one from a scientific Avicennan perspective, and another from a religious-spiritual Ġazālian perspective. Neither, I have argued, does Ibn Ṭufayl intend to reduce to the other. Although I have not discussed desire in this chapter, outside of making clear my approach to the text, I have argued that from the very beginning of the tale, Ibn Ṭufayl has both Avicenna and al-Ġazālī at work in his story, in line with his intentions. Thus, as we move forward, we are well placed to appreciate the role both thinkers play in Ibn Ṭufayl's treatment of our key concept, desire.

CHAPTER 6

# The Desire Inherent to Ibn Ṭufayl's Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān

We turn now to the life of our antagonist, Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān. With few exceptions, desire does not play a large role in interpretations of the text, and indeed one might think it largely irrelevant except as a necessary part of Ḥayy's journey to know and understand the nature of reality. However, passages on desire show that Ibn Ṭufayl systematically accounts for Ḥayy's progression toward the truth with a mechanism constructed of desire and attachment by which he is pushed and pulled in tandem toward the Necessary Existent. This usage echoes Ibn Ṭufayl's stated intention in the prologue to incite in his readers desire for the truth, which he does by showing the education of Ḥayy's own desire for truth along that path. We will find that Ḥayy's desire for the truth, which on Ibn Ṭufayl's account is simply the reality of the True Agent, begins after Ḥayy loses his adoptive doe mother. Turning to consider Ḥayy's education, I will argue that the backbone and aim of Ḥayy's education rests on the progression of his desire, *tašawwuq*, which aims at its own unique goal, witnessing, *mušāhada*, of the Agent. This desire is accompanied and aided by the attachment, *taʿalluq*, that here always co-occurs with it. At each crucial point of Ḥayy's education and in descriptions of his goal, Ibn Ṭufayl utilizes this notion to account for the way in which one is successful, namely, one must be attached to the Agent alone and nothing else. After looking more closely at the goal at which Ḥayy's desire and education aim, I examine the subject of this education, and argue that it is Ḥayy's power for witnessing the Agent. However, I maintain that Ḥayy's *fikr*, reasoning, is important both for his ultimate connection to the Agent and for uniting the different strands of inquiry Ḥayy undertakes. In the end, I will argue that with a combination of Avicenna's and al-Ġazālī's conceptions of desire Ibn Ṭufayl offers an account of education that begins with the death of the doe and concludes with unification with the divine. In fact, we find that Ibn Ṭufayl's intention for his text as stated in the prologue is fundamentally connected to the same notion of desire that runs throughout *Ḥayy*, and the prologue identifies the key thinkers to whom Ibn Ṭufayl is indebted for his conceptions of desire. I will argue that Ibn Ṭufayl continues to weave together Avicennian and Ġazālian notions of philosophical and spiritual progress, and that the combination of these two thinkers on the question of desire is crucial to understanding the whole of the text.

## 1 Ḥayy's Desire

Desire plays an important role throughout the entirety of Ḥayy's life and intellectual pursuits. Taneli Kukkonen highlighted the role of desire within Ḥayy's development in his examination of the Neoplatonic ethical nature of the text. In his examination, he noted the connection between the desire for the doe and the desire for the forms, explaining this desire as follows. "It is these [forms], we are told, that form the proper object of the philosopher's love and desire (*shawq*): the chosen term, while at once reminiscent of Sufi doctrine and Plato's *Symposium*, also quite deliberately echoes that used earlier to describe Ḥayy's affection for the animal spirit that had guided the doe."[1] Kukkonen here seems to identify forms and soul (not an unreasonable identification on an Aristotelian model). But the aspect of the form or soul that Ḥayy latches on to is what is responsible for the *actions* of individual creatures. The form or nature is the something that specifies each animal or plant and by which they perform their actions.[2] It is not the forms or soul most specifically the Ḥayy desires, but, as I will argue below, the agency it manifests, the agency responsible for the unity and acts of individual things in the world. Kukkonen rightly highlights the desire and its role in Ḥayy's development, but this notion plays a more thorough and important role. More recently, David Wirmer has analyzed the instances of *šawq* in the text, and has argued for what he calls the "Almohadization of natural desire."[3] With "Almohadization," he refers to Ibn Ṭufayl's commitment to the capacity of science inevitably to lead to God, as a result of which natural desire goes beyond the intellection or theoretical knowledge that marked the goal of natural desire according to al-Fārābī and Ibn Bāǧǧa.[4] Wirmer also connects Ibn Ṭufayl's use of desire to his statement in the prologue that he intends to incite desire, and this proclaimed intention is where I will begin my own investigation.[5] I aim to complement both of these accounts, both by specifying the nature of desire as Ibn Ṭufayl uses it and by further highlighting the influence of al-Ġazālī on the notion of desire and its role in the text.

One can generalize Ibn Ṭufayl's intention, which Kukkonen identifies as a basic feature of our author's methodology: "Instead of providing arguments for

1 Kukkonen, "No Man Is an Island," 195.

2 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 65.

3 This is what Wirmer calls, "die Almohadisierung des natürlichen Begehrens," see Wirmer, "Das natürliche Begehren," 239–240.

4 Wirmer, 239.

5 Wirmer, 238.

the views he wishes to advance, Ibn Tufayl effectively invites the reader to join in Hayy's experiences."[6] This point is especially true in Ibn Tufayl's treatment of desire, since the role of desire in Ḥayy's life is the fulfillment of the claims Ibn Ṭufayl made about desire at the end of the prologue. There, he claimed, "I turn now to a small glimpse along the road of arousing desire (*al-tašwīq*) and urging upon the beginning of the path."[7] We see this theme highlighted again in the epilogue, where he says, "I wanted to facilitate in the discourse the desiring and arousing of desire (*al-tašwīq wa-l-ḥaṯṯ*) for the beginning of the path."[8] This commitment to "inciting desire" is another imitation of al-Ġazālī. In his *Jewels*, al-Ġazālī explains the six divisions of the Qurʾān, al-Ġazālī claims, "One describes the states of those who answer the call to God, and His delicate dealings with them, the secret and purpose of this being the arousing of desire (*al-tašwīq wa-l-targīb*)."[9] Ibn Ṭufayl's purpose, beyond the content of the story, is to produce in his reader desire—*al-tašwīq*—for the path of truth that Ḥayy follows and that Ibn Ṭufayl describes in the prologue. Consideration of this apparent source of the images Ibn Ṭufayl invokes to explain his goal suggests that he sees this practice as analogous to procedure of Qurʾān explication as sketched by al-Ġazālī. On such a reading, in his production of *Ḥayy*, Ibn Ṭufayl mimics one of the characteristics of the Qurʾān, displaying divine care in order to facilitate desire for the truth. Below, we will see that he reproduces this practice in his depiction of Ḥayy's life and education. Desire, *tašawwuq*, is integral to Ḥayy's education, picking up on the intended instigation of desire, *tašwīq*, Ibn Ṭufayl wants to incite in the reader. Not only do these thematic and terminological parallels suggest Ibn Ṭufayl's indebtedness to al-Ġazālī, they reveal the unity of the goal and procedure of *Ḥayy* between the prologue, epilogue, and the narrative.

Within this narrative, we find desire, variations of *š-w-q*, occur throughout the text. In most of these, Ḥayy's desire is directed at what he considers to be something's essence or self, and in the eighth and last instance, it is directed at his fellow aspirant Absāl. It will become clear that in the pivotal moments of Ḥayy's awareness, this desire is always accompanied by attachment, variations of *ʿ-l-q*. At each point of Ḥayy's development, his desire and attachment change according to and along with his understanding of the truth. Together, these two terms both form the connection between Ḥayy

6 Kukkonen, *Ibn Tufayl*, 51.

7 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 20, my translation.

8 Ibn Ṭufayl, 156, my translation.

9 al-Ġazālī, *Jawāhir al-Qurʾān*, 23–24; al-Ġazālī, *The Jewels of the Qurʾān*, 21, translation modified.

and the Agent and are responsible for moving him closer to it. Ibn Ṭufayl describes three moments that capture Ḥayy's realizations of the nature of the object of his desire, and in each of these moments desire and attachment change as his understanding of the object of his desire changes. Below I will argue that the object Ḥayy is working to uncover throughout the narrative is the Agent, which he eventually identifies as the first cause or the Necessary Existent, and that Ḥayy first discerns aspects of this Agent after the death of the doe mother after which he works to develop it throughout the text.

The first instance of desire, *šawq*, and of the notion of desire in the narrative in general, occurs after Ḥayy's adoptive doe mother dies from old age. This doe, who suckled and cared for Ḥayy as a baby and young child had become his only companion, after the physical and intellectual developmental differences between Ḥayy and his former deer playmates grew too great. Ḥayy cares for the doe in her old age, until, when Ḥayy is seven, she finally dies. Despondent, Ḥayy tries to bring her back to life by opening her chest to "remove" that which, according to his analysis, blocked her life functions.[10] After locating the central organ "without which none of the external parts could function," i.e. the heart, and seeing that not only was there no blockage, but that it was *empty*, he understands she is dead.[11] Supposing that whatever was in the heart was the life principle of his mother—and therefore the true identity of his mother—he realizes that whatever she was, she was not her body, and she is not coming back. Ibn Ṭufayl describes Ḥayy's realization of her identity and her loss as follows.

> [Ḥayy] soon dropped the body and thought no more of it, knowing that the mother who had nursed him and showed him so much kindness could only be that being which had departed. From that—and not from this lifeless body—all those actions (*afʿāl*) had issued. The whole body was simply like a tool of this being, like the stick with which he fought the animals. His attachment (*ʿalāqatahū*) was transferred (*intaqalat*) now from the body to the being that was its master and mover (*ṣāḥib al-jasad wamuḥarrikuhū*). There remained desire (*šawq*) only toward that.[12]

10 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 38–39.

11 Ibn Ṭufayl, 44–45. It has not always been appreciated in the literature that Ḥayy does not realize the doe is dead until *after* he attempts to operate on her. More on this point below.

12 Ibn Ṭufayl, 45, modified.

There are two aspects of this text that will recur. The first aspect is the emphasis on agency. Ḥayy's focus is on what Ibn Ṭufayl describes here as the master or companion of the body and what moves it, since what he is interested in identifying is whatever is responsible for the *actions*, *afʿāl*, of the doe. The second is that Ḥayy looks beyond visible, physical bodies to something else that is not reducible to them. Doing so shifts his vision from the bodies he can see to something that is not immediately visible, and in the process his estimation of such bodies falls. After he realized that the body of the doe was not his mother, "The body became contemptible in his opinion, and there was no value to it."[13] In this episode, Ḥayy begins the process of pinpointing the agent as such, as what is responsible for acting, which in this case he understands only in terms of his doe mother. Importantly, Ibn Ṭufayl's description of Ḥayy's realization indicates that Ḥayy was already attached to his mother before she died—since his attachment was *transferred*, requiring the attachment already to exist. Indeed, earlier Ibn Ṭufayl tells us that, as an infant, Ḥayy was fond of his mother to the point of severe tears when she was gone for too long, and that, shortly before her death, he and the doe were inseparable from one another.[14] In fact, given that Ḥayy had recently learned to cover himself with an old eagle skin—a habit that terrified the other animals—the doe was the only one who would approach him.[15] What changes is Ḥayy's conception of what the doe *is*. Since he now knows that "the mother who had nursed him and showed him so much kindness could only be that being which had departed," he looks to what was responsible for the doe's action.[16] Ḥayy does not yet name this thing that he now identifies as his mother. But, upon making a distinction between the user and the tool, he makes an (as yet) implicit ontological distinction between what appears to be real and what actually is real, between the moved and the mover. He had believed that his mother was the body he saw. However, he now comes to the conclusion that she is that thing which has left the body, the thing he later identifies as spirit, *rūḥ*.[17] Further, after he sees that his mother's real identity is not her body, he identifies it as something she held in common with the other deer with which he grew up. The deer were afraid of him, so he did not share with these deer the intimacy that he enjoyed with his mother. But after

13 Ibn Ṭufayl, 45, my translation.

14 Ibn Ṭufayl, 33, 39.

15 Ibn Ṭufayl, 37–38.

16 Ibn Ṭufayl, 45.

17 Ibn Ṭufayl, 52, 56. On this point see also Kukkonen, "Heart, Spirit, Form, Substance," 207.

the doe's death, he is nevertheless fond of them, and even feels tender toward them because of their likeness to his mother. His discovery of the shared form and figure (*šakl*, *ṣūra*) begins a line of investigation that leads him to the notion of vital spirit.[18]

Desire appears next as part of Ḥayy's realization of soul, which shares a similar structure with his realization of spirit. This realization happens after he spent years developing the notion spirit, from which he did not progress until he was twenty-one years old and which, he had concluded, "itself was one, and it was this which was his real self (*ḥaqīqat al-ḏāt*), all other organs serving as its tools."[19] The connection of his conclusion to his real self will also recur throughout, and it is this conclusion that "he himself was one" that leads to his next realization. At this point, he has begun investigating the oneness of animal species and material reality in general, and this investigation leads him to the next shift in his desire. First, he concludes that the animal spirit he had investigated, "must itself have a principle over and above it corporeality, [and] by that factor (*maʿnan*) it would be able to carry out all its wonderful tasks (*aʿmāl*) of the sorts of sensing kinds of apprehending and kinds of movements. That factor is its form (*ṣūra*) [...] (or) the animal soul (*al-nafs al-ḥayawāniyya*)."[20] After drawing these conclusions, Ḥayy's desire changes in turn. For starters, he realizes that his former conception of the object of his desire was not specific enough.

> When Ḥayy understood, through this line of reasoning, that the substance of the animal spirit (*al-rūḥ al-ḥayawānī*), toward which all his desire (*tašawwuquhū*) had been directed, was compounded out of the corporeal factor and another factor additional to the corporeal, and that it had the former in common with every other body, while the latter, linked with it, belonged exclusively to this spirit, he felt contempt for physicality.[21]

Note that Ḥayy's altered estimation of physicality here parallels the alteration that happens after the death of the doe. There, after realizing that his mother was not the body, he judged the body to be contemptible and without value. The same process occurs here, and as Ḥayy realizes that the corporeal was not what he really wanted, he no longer finds it valuable. His desire and attach-

18 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 46.
19 Ibn Ṭufayl, 56.
20 Ibn Ṭufayl, 64.
21 Ibn Ṭufayl, 65, modified.

ment adjust in turn. "He dropped the physical and his heart fastened (*taʿallaqa bāluhū*) on the other factor, which is called simply the soul (*al-nafs*). He now desired to be sure about it (*fa-tašawwaqa ilā al-taḥaqquq bi-hī*)."[22] Of particular interest here again is the certain act or actions (*fiʿl mā aw afʿāl*) that come from forms.[23] Ḥayy undergoes the same pattern of change here that he experienced above, as his attachment changes alongside his desire to identify this object or principle ultimately responsible for action, the same as in the case of the doe.

Ibn Ṭufayl highlights Ḥayy's desire to verify and deepen his grasp of the object as Ḥayy becomes aware of the final object of his desire, the Agent responsible for all things. This realization occurs when he is thirty-five years old, after years of investigating the nature of materiality and causality as they relate to the physical world. Specifically, he realizes that all forms must have a cause outside of them, owing both to the fact that all forms of bodies come to be, and that materiality itself cannot explain the being of form. He concludes, "Clearly the actions (*afʿāl*) emerging from forms did not really arise in them, but the actions attributed to them were brought about through them by an [different] Agent (*fāʿil*)."[24] This passage is the first to connect the actions that Ḥayy sees in the world to one specific *agent*, who Ibn Ṭufayl immediately connects to God by quoting the Quran. He explains that, upon this realization, "Ḥayy found in himself a burning desire (*šawq ḥaṭīṭ*) for knowledge of [the Agent] (*maʿrifahū*) in detail (*ʿalā l-tafṣīl*)."[25] After considering the nature of the heavens and the question of the eternity of the world, he concludes that regardless of whether or not the world is eternal, it must nevertheless have an Agent, a conclusion upon which Ḥayy drops his consideration to focus further on the Agent. This Agent (*hāḏā fāʿil*), he concludes, is responsible for the existence of all form, and further, is the cause (*ʿilla*) of all things, which are its effects.[26] Thus, once Ḥayy began to see the Agent behind all things, "His desire for it intensified (*ištadda šawquhū*), and his heart (*qalb*) was entirely removed from the world of sense, and attached (*taʿallaqa*) to the world of mind."[27] Note that as Ḥayy comes closer to the Agent, his desire intensifies. Further, Ḥayy realizes that his own essence in reality is whatever made him aware of this Agent, a point I will examine at

22 Ibn Ṭufayl, 65.
23 Ibn Ṭufayl, 66.
24 Ibn Ṭufayl, 74.
25 Ibn Ṭufayl, 74.
26 Ibn Ṭufayl, 86.
27 Ibn Ṭufayl, 90, my translation.

length below, and thus after seeing that his true self is not "this embodiment," he "felt contempt for his body altogether."[28] This devaluation of body and physicality that accompanies all of Ḥayy's realizations thus continues to the very last.

After Ḥayy's initial realization of the true Agent—and his desire to grasp and realize it further—Ibn Ṭufayl provides an extended analysis of the power responsible for and capable of the realization and witnessing, *mušāhada*, of the Agent or essence. This discussion follows Ḥayy's realization that his true self (*ḥaqīqiyya ḏātuhū*) cannot perish, and his curiosity concerning what happens to his self after his body perishes. Notably, he identifies his true self as that by which he apprehends (*idraka*) this existent that is necessary with respect to its existence.[29] This passage is relevant to our concerns here, since it is the most extensive account of desire (*tašawwuq*) as such that Ibn Ṭufayl offers, an account that clearly stands in the *DA* tradition I examined above. The section begins with an explanation of an apprehending power, *quwwa mudrika*, and examines the presence of desire in such a power depending on whether the power is active or potential. Ibn Ṭufayl does not limit the apprehending powers to a power of physical perception, but instead describes a power that is proper to human beings and that, on his account, is responsible for witnessing the Real. It is by his implementation of an apprehending power that is *specifically* for the true Agent that Ibn Ṭufayl places an inherent desire at the core of the human being. His explanation offers a full and precise account of the nature of the power for witnessing, the desire that is its propulsion, and the relation between the subject and object of this power. Indeed, Ibn Ṭufayl simultaneously rejects the non-inherent model of desire that Ibn Bāǧǧa espoused while integrating the *DA* model of psychological powers. Ibn Ṭufayl attributes desire to the individual power of apprehension, and his account is thereby similar to the account of desire we read in *DA* as transmitted in Averroes's commentaries—the apprehending power *itself* desires. Ibn Ṭufayl acknowledges several different powers of apprehension, each of which has its own desire by being a power of its specific type. Of special interest in this section is the identity of the *subject* of desire, and Ibn Ṭufayl's identification of the power for apprehending specifically the Agent and the subject or person to whom the power ostensibly belongs. First, he explains the nature of an apprehending power in general.

28 Ibn Ṭufayl, 92, my translation.

29 Ibn Ṭufayl, 92.

> So [Ḥayy] examined all of the apprehending powers, and he saw each one of them sometimes was apprehending in potentiality and sometimes was apprehending in actuality, just like the eye in the state of having been closed or turned away from what is seen, so that it is apprehending in potentiality. And the meaning of apprehending in potentiality is that it does not apprehend now and it apprehends in the future, while in a state of being open and facing [the visible object], the eye is apprehending in actuality, the meaning of apprehending in actuality being that it apprehends now.[30]

Noteworthy here is that Ibn Ṭufayl does not make a strong distinct between first and second potentiality or first and second actuality. Rather, a power is in potentiality only insofar as it is not apprehending right now but can apprehend in the future, just as being in actuality is simply apprehending right now. It is possible that this distinction might not work with, for example, the power of sight that he offers. But insofar as Ibn Ṭufayl will identify the basic self of the human being as the power to apprehend the Truth, this passage already highlights the distinction between what Ibn Ṭufayl is interested in and something like theoretical knowledge, which does function on the model of first and second potentiality and first and second actuality. Also clear from this passage is the apparent conflation between a power and the subject having that power, namely, between the power of sight and the eye that sees insofar as it is the subject of sight. Ibn Ṭufayl continues with this visual example, as he adds an analysis of desire to the framework.

> And each one of these powers that does not ever apprehend in actuality is something that remains in potentiality. It does not desire (*tatašawwaqu*) to apprehend (*idrāk*) the thing proper to it, because it is not acquainted with it yet, like someone born blind. And if [the power] has already apprehended in actuality, sometimes it then goes into potentiality, so that as long as it is in potentiality, it desires to apprehend in actuality. For it had already been acquainted with that which is apprehended, and was attached (*taʿallaqat*) to it, and longed (*ḥannat*) for it, like someone who is endowed with sight, and then becomes blind, so that he does not cease desiring objects of sight.[31]

30 Ibn Ṭufayl, 93, my translation.

31 Ibn Ṭufayl, 93–94, my translation.

It may seem that the claim that "if a power has never been in actuality that power does not desire its object" is easily false—it is possible that one who learns about a certain power one lacks, e.g. for seeing, tasting, hearing, one might well wish that one had that power. But Ibn Ṭufayl is speaking not about the individual endowed with the power, but about the power itself. Thus, he claims that the very power that at one time apprehended its object, and yet now has ceased in its apprehension, desires to apprehend its object again in actuality. This claim is a bit unusual, since, for example, one frequently enjoys the lack of an object of apprehension, namely, in the way that silence is desirable after a long day working in a noisy place. The explanation Ibn Ṭufayl gives us for this claim is that the power itself has become attached to its objects of apprehension and in turn desires them. This situation is like the power of someone who was at one time able to see, but has now gone blind. It is especially important for us that Ibn Ṭufayl is still discussing general powers of apprehension, and thus he is not discussing sight's desire for *one specific* object of apprehension but *types* of objects. Thus, the power of sight has an inherent generic desire, that is, it is characterized by a type of desire which attaches to objects of sight, rather than having an inherent desire for one specific thing. In this discussion, the conflation between the power and the person endowed with the power has become evident. Further, over the course of this discussion, Ibn Ṭufayl echoes something Ibn Bāǧǧa had already made clear: not all people who have the capacity to be a human being indeed actualize that capacity. In the previous passage, Ibn Ṭufayl is discussing only powers of sense apprehension. But since he will identify the true human self with an apprehending power of the same structure (that power being what he intends this analogy to elucidate), his claim that some individuals never actualize their apprehending power will also mean that some human beings lack properly human desire altogether. For this reason, as we will read below, once such individuals die, they have no desire for the Necessary Existence, since they never knew it in the first place.

Continuing on, Ibn Ṭufayl specifies that, in the case of one who *has* activated the apprehending power at issue, the desire for and ache at the loss of its apprehensible object intensifies in direct proportion to the perfection of this object.

> According to the greater completeness, greater brilliance, and greater beauty the apprehended object has, the desire (*tašawwuq*) for it is greater, and the ache on account of its loss is more severe. In a similar way, the ache of someone who loses his vision after seeing is more severe than the ache of one who loses his sense of smell, since the things that vision

> apprehends are more perfect and more beautiful than those which smell apprehends. If there is something infinite in its perfection and without limit in its beauty and brilliance, it is beyond perfection and beauty and brilliance. And [regarding such an object] there is not in existence [any] perfection, nor excellence, nor brilliance, nor beauty, that is not emanating from it and abundant on the part of it. So, there is no doubt that one who loses apprehension (*idrāk*) of that thing after he was aware of it is in endless agony as long as he is devoid of it. In turn, the one who is apprehending perpetually (*ʿalā l-dawām*) is in unbroken bliss and happiness without limit, seeing it with limitless delight and pleasure.[32]

Ibn Ṭufayl makes clear that the intensity of the desire proper to a power increases when its object is more perfect. He offers as an example the fact that the loss of vision pains people more than the loss of smell. This contrast is not only of two kinds of apprehensible objects, but also of two distinct powers, the power to see and the power to smell. The power to sense the most perfect, brilliant, and beautiful object is something additional to the five senses, as Ḥayy himself enumerates just prior to our passage.[33] Ibn Ṭufayl will identify this power above the powers of sensation as the truly human power, showing that although there are in his account several distinct inherent desires, there is only one that is properly human.

Ibn Ṭufayl's account is heavily influenced by Avicenna's account of pleasure and perfection in regard to psychological powers in the metaphysics section of his *Book of the Healing* (*Kitāb al-šifāʾ*), where he claims that, "For every psychological power, there is a pleasure and a good proper to it and a harm and an evil proper it."[34] Further, the perfections of these powers occur along a sliding scale:

> Even though these powers share in these meanings, in reality their levels are different. For with that whose perfection is better and more complete, that whose perfection is more abundant, that whose perfection is more enduring, that whose perfection is more accessible to it and more readily realized for it, that which in itself performs its act more perfectly [and performs] a better [kind of act], and that which in itself is more intense in apprehension, [it follows] inevitably that the pleasure it has is greater and more abundant.[35]

32 Ibn Ṭufayl, 94–95, my translation.

33 Ibn Ṭufayl, 90–92.

34 Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, 348.

35 Avicenna, 348.

Avicenna then explains that one who has not experienced certain kinds of apprehensions will be unable to desire these apprehensions in their particularity, offering as an example the state of blindness, in which, on his view, one cannot imagine or even desire seeing as such, insofar as the individual has no previous experience of seeing to which this experience compares.

All this discussion of apprehending powers comes to a head as Ibn Ṭufayl connects it specifically to one's realization of the Necessary Existent, articulating it with respect to all three stages of apprehension of this existent. One's awareness of this existent has obvious effects on one's desire for it, which can continue after death. He explains that if one, while embodied, has never been made aware of the Necessary Existent, "then on leaving the body he will neither desire (*yaštāqu*) this being nor mourn his loss."[36] Conversely, to have apprehended the most perfect object temporarily and not perpetually means the greatest desire, as already established. Recall that after Ḥayy first unifies with the Necessary Existent, his desire intensifies, *ištadda šawquhū*, for the object of its apprehension.[37] Although it is clear *that* Ḥayy is aware of the Necessary Existent, Ibn Ṭufayl does not make explicit at what point Ḥayy became aware of this existent, and whether he had to be aware of the existent *as such* to desire it. However, I think the mechanism of desire and the progression along which Ḥayy moves make clear that he has been desiring the Necessary Existent from his initial realization of agency, although he did not always know it as such. As I have traced it above, his desire develops and redirects as Ḥayy himself consistently redefines and strengthens his understanding of agency and the Agent he seeks—that is, the Necessary Existent. His desire and attachment first aim at the spirit, then the soul, and at last the Agent, truth and essence itself. In all cases he investigates the source of actions that operates above and beyond physicality. I will spend a section below examining the connection between Ḥayy himself and this power for witnessing the Necessary Existent, but it is already clear that Ḥayy identifies his true self as the part of him that can apprehend the Necessary Existent, this special part he identified in the prologue as a metaphorical power (more on this in section 5).[38] Thus, we have a clear identification between Ḥayy and the power at issue. Ibn Ṭufayl does not actually tell us whether the desire proper to the power for apprehending the Agent is permanent, even if one successfully apprehends the Agent into death, only that this person has limitless delight and pleasure. I will argue in the next section that, based on

36 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 95.
37 Ibn Ṭufayl, 134.
38 Ibn Ṭufayl, 92.

what I take to be Ibn Ṭufayl's guiding influences, this desire is permanent to the power apprehending, even if it is not painful.

Before moving on to discuss those influences in closer detail, I want to mention the remaining example of desire. There are few remaining occurrences of *šawq*. Ibn Ṭufayl once claims that the celestial bodies desire the true Agent (*tatašawwaqu ʾilayhi*), a longing Ḥayy both shares with and models after them in the spiritual exercises he later undertakes.[39] Last, and perhaps most intriguingly, Ibn Ṭufayl claims that once Ḥayy has observed Absāl and has realized he must be one who searches for the truth, Ḥayy desires (*tašawwaqa ʾilayhi*) him.[40] In both cases there is a connection between the thing that desires and the truth: the celestial bodies desire the Necessary Existent, and Ḥayy desires Absāl after he realizes Absāl "is one of those essences that is aware of the truth."[41] Even though this last usage appears anomalous, there remains a fundamental connection between Ḥayy's desire, *šawq*, and the truth, *al-ḥaqq*.

## 2 Ibn Ṭufayl's Interpretation of Avicenna and al-Ġazālī on Desire

Throughout this book, I have been tracing two different philosophical models for understanding desire, one that I have called the inherent model of desire, and another that I have called the non-inherent model. Ibn Bāǧǧa, Ibn Ṭufayl's self-proclaimed Andalusī predecessor and, to some extent, rival, utilizes the non-inherent model exclusively and consistently throughout his work, even more so than al-Fārābī, as I argued in the two previous chapters. It already became clear in the previous section that although Ibn Ṭufayl utilizes a version of Aristotlian psychology, desire itself is not a power among other powers. Rather, the desire itself *comes from* or *belongs to* the powers of apprehension, including the one he identifies as Ḥayy's essence. As we saw in chapter 3, this understanding apprehending powers and desire resembles that transmitted by Averroes in his commentaries on the *DA*. Further, this power, as we saw, has a specific object that it is connected to in kind and that it alone can apprehend. In this section, I will argue that Ibn Ṭufayl's combination of Avicenna's and al-Ġazālī's accounts of desire, *tašawwuq*, forms a basic part of his own inherent model of desire. This model is thus heavily influenced both by the Aristotelian tradition and by al-Ġazālī's theological account.

39 Ibn Ṭufayl, 114.

40 Ibn Ṭufayl, 141. For Kukkonen's interpretation of this desire, see "No Man an Island," 201–203.

41 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 141.

In the examination of Avicenna's commentary on the *ThA*, we found that he interpreted Plotinian ideas through an Aristotelian lens, for example, by interpreting the soul as the form of the body. In Avicenna's own thought, the framework within which desire functions is Aristotelian through and through, and thus his understanding of desire and its role is in turn understood in this context. In his *Healing*, Avicenna examines desire both in his treatment of the motive power in his discussion of soul, and in his discussion of celestial motion in the metaphysics. In both, as we found in the cases of al-Fārābī and Ibn Bāǧǧa, we find an account of desire fundamentally reliant on works of Aristotle, in the former case the *DA*, and in the latter case an interpretation of the *Phys*. and *Met*. grown out of the commentary tradition.[42] In both cases, desire is discussed within accounts of motion, both in the motion instigated by animal souls and by the motion we see in the heavenly spheres. However, in the *Healing*, Avicenna does not thematize theoretical human desire per se. He does so in his *Treatise on Love*, but there is no indication that Ibn Ṭufayl had this text, with no terminological and little conceptual overlap. Perhaps the fact that Avicenna had no extended account of theoretical or "true" human desire is what drove Ibn Ṭufayl to develop and to extrapolate his position in the first place, in combination with the thought of al-Ġazālī. In fact, in accounting for and characterizing desire that is proper to human beings Ibn Bāǧǧa and Ibn Ṭufayl do not follow that trend of eastern thinkers like al-Fārābī and Avicenna, who discuss desire that is proper to will or practical intellect, but who do not consistently discern a precise kind of desire operative in various acts of human intellection.[43]

In Avicenna's account of the motive power, he argues that the desiring power, *al-quwwa al-šawqiyya*, is a primary principle of motion.[44] Following the emphasis of the *DA* translations, he also emphasizes the fact that one must be aware of (*šaʿara*) the object of desire before desire is possible, such that desire follows upon an act of imagination (*taḫayyul*), estimation (*wahm*), or cogitation (*fikr*).[45] Further, in the discussion of desire, *šawq*, and the motive power in the discussion on animal psychology from the *Healing*, he specifies that appetite and irascibility are branches of the desiring power.[46] Further, in his notes on the *DA*, Avicenna defines desire, *šawq*, as that which com-

42 See Janos, "Moving the Orbs," 182.

43 We saw one objection to this in the case of al-Fārābī. See above, pp. 127–128.

44 Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, 222.

45 *Avicenna's* De Anima, 194, and Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, 222.

46 *Avicenna's* De Anima, 195.

prises the appetitive (*al-šahwānī*), the irascible (*al-ġaḍabī*), and the voluntary (*al-irādī*).[47] He also remarks in these notes that desire is proper to practical intellect, maintaining the connection between these three types of desire and motion.[48] However, there is a basic and important difference between Avicenna's and Ibn Ṭufayl's accounts of desire regarding the relation between desire and the apprehending power. Avicenna claims that in order for something to desire anything at all, one must have somehow apprehended it, e.g. by means of imagination, which in turn works with the desiderative power and may or may not produce an instance of desire. This account is built on the non-inherent model, in which the desiring power is one power that works in tandem with other powers, specifically powers of apprehension. By contrast, while he agrees that the object must be apprehended, Ibn Ṭufayl's account—in fact, one of the most striking features of his account—is that the *power itself* desires, insofar as the power itself longs to be perfected, realized, actualized. This change is certainly a novel intervention into Avicenna's theory on Ibn Ṭufayl's part.[49] Nevertheless, it is clear above that, on Ibn Ṭufayl's account of apprehending powers in general, desire is generic insofar as it is for types of objects, not for one specific object.

The discussion of desire in the account of motion per se is perhaps not particularly enlightening, but Avicenna's discussion of desire within the heavenly bodies is more germane to our investigation. In his discussion of the heavenly bodies at the end of the metaphysical portion of his *Healing*, Avicenna repeatedly connects heavenly motion to the desire they have for Intellect. Here his influence on Ibn Ṭufayl is noticeable, specifically on the related notion of perfection and imitation, which Kukkonen highlights in his discussion of desire, tracing Avicenna's understanding of heavenly motion to the late ancient commentary tradition.[50] After briefly summarizing the role of desire in motion in general, Avicenna turns to discuss celestial motion in particular. Like the motion of sublunary bodies, the motion of the heavenly bodies is due to desire. He writes, "[Motion's] principle is the desire (*šawq*) to imitate (*al-tašahhub*), to the extent that this is possible, the ultimate good by enduring in the [state of] the most perfect perfection. The principle of this desire is what is intellectu-

47 Badawī, *Arisṭū ʿinda l-ʿarab*, 112.

48 Badawī, 112–113.

49 This obscurity regarding what exactly apprehends—the soul or the power—led to fierce debate in the post-Avicennan tradition in the East. Various objections to Avicenna's account were quickly levelled by Abū l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī and Sharaf al-Dīn al-Masʿūdī. Cf. the latter's *Al-Mubāḥiṯ wa-l-Šukūk* in Shihadeh, *Doubts on Avicenna*, 209 ff.

50 See Kukkonen, "No Man Is an Island," 197–199.

ally apprehended (*yaʿqilu*) of [the ultimate good]."[51] The connection between desire and imitation is basic to Avicenna's account of the motion of heavenly bodies. Because the heavenly bodies are ultimately material and imitating the ultimate good through motion, they always fail to attain it truly. In Ibn Ṭufayl's narrative, after Ḥayy comes to understand the reality of the ultimate Agent, he attempts to perfect himself by undertaking various forms of spiritual exercise, imitation the various parts of the world that correspond to all parts of his self: vegetative-animal, heavenly, and divine.[52] It is clear here that the threefold mimetic exercises that Ḥayy ultimately undertakes to liken the various parts of himself to God were inspired by Avicenna's own account of the heavenly bodies' imitation of the ultimate good.[53] Of course, even here, Ibn Ṭufayl adjusts the specifics of Avicenna's account, since imitation in the original account is by way of a kind of intellection, and the version we find in Ibn Ṭufayl is more expansive, if only because the subject is a human being rather than a celestial sphere. Further, Ibn Ṭufayl offers accounts of imitation at all levels of Ḥayy's self. This threefold imitation is, again, a remarkable similarity to the one Avicenna highlights in his commentary on the *ThA*, where he claims that, "For the soul, then, there are three imitations (*tašabbuhāt*): imitation of intellect, in which [it is] as remembering (*ḏākir*) the intellectual concepts, imitation of the heavenly bodies, and imitation of the earthly bodies."[54]

Just as with Avicenna, we also find the influence of al-Ġazālī on Ibn Ṭufayl's conception of desire. Specifically, as I will argue, Ibn Ṭufayl takes over the global conception of desire for God that al-Ġazālī lays out in his own discussion of desire for God in Book 36 of the *Revival*, as well as using thematic overtones from Book 35 to emphasize the connection between the doe and God in Ḥayy's progression. Examination of al-Ġazālī's discussion of *šawq* in the ninth section of Book 36 reveals a strong similarity between Ibn Ṭufayl's use of desire (*šawq*) and al-Ġazālī's use of the same term. Al-Ġazālī calls this book *The Book of Love, Desire, Intimacy, and Contentment* (*Kitāb al-maḥabba wa-l-šawq wa-l-uns wa-l-riḍā*), and in it he outlines the steps involved in love of God, which he cites as "the utmost goal among the stages and the supreme summit of the steps."[55] In the section entitled, "Explanation of the Meaning of the Desire (*šawq*) for God the Exalted," al-Ġazālī begins by insisting on the existence of longing for

51 Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, 314.

52 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 105–120.

53 See Janos, "Moving the Orbs," 202; and also Belo, *Chance and Determinism*, 105–113.

54 Badawī, *Arisṭu ʿinda al-ʿArab*, 51; Adamson, "The Arabic Plotinus: A Study," 337, altered.

55 al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-Dīn*, 2580; and al-Ġazālī, *Al-Ghazali on Love*, 2. Translations from Ormsby frequently modified for consistency.

God, something he takes as granted since, in the previous section, he emphasized that all people continually bear witness to God whenever they apprehend any aspect of the world.[56] Most are unaware of that they indeed are perceiving God owing, on the one hand, to the obviousness of this apprehension, and on the other, because of the hiddenness (*ġumūḍ*) of God's magnificence in these instances.[57] This concept of concealment connects to the desire we have for God. Al-Ġazālī explains two different types of desire, and argues that these two types of desire apply to cases in which God is the beloved. He explicates the first type of desire for God in terms of the desire one has owing to the concealment of parts of one's beloved.

> Every beloved (*maḥbūb*) in its concealment (*ġayba*) is desired undoubtedly. A beloved who is present and attained cannot be desired because desire (*al-šawq*) seeks and desires (*tašawwaqa*) for something, and something found is not sought. But it is clear that desire is not conceivable except toward something [which] is apprehended (*šay' 'udrika*) from one aspect and [which] is not apprehended (*lam yudrak*) from one aspect. As for what is not apprehended at all, there is no desire for it.[58]

In the last sentence of this passage, al-Ġazālī makes the same point that we saw al-Fārābī and Ibn Bāğğa emphasize, namely, that one must know *something* of the object one desires in order to desire it at all. He continues to clarify the two types of concealment that provoke this first type of desire, in each case using a visual example to clarify his meaning, since vision, on his view, is the most perfect apprehension. The first cause of desire is the absence of the beloved one has once seen. Al-Ġazālī offers an example: "A man whose beloved is absent but in whose heart an image remains, desires (*yaštāqu*) to complete that image by direct sight (*rawīya*)."[59] The second cause of desire is that one sees only part of the beloved, and wishes to see the rest of the beloved and its features. This experience would be similar to that in which one sees only the face of the beloved, and not the rest of the features, such as the hair.[60] In both cases, part of the beloved is "visible" in some way, while remaining invisible in another. This desire, namely, the desire that something concealed be made apparent, is the first type of desire for God. He claims that

56 al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 2615; *Al-Ghazali on Love*, 82.
57 al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 2616; *Al-Ghazali on Love*, 83.
58 al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 2618; *Al-Ghazali on Love*, 88.
59 al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 2619; *Al-Ghazali on Love* 88.
60 al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 2619; *Al-Ghazali on Love* 89.

> Both these aspects are conceivable with respect to God; indeed, acceptance of them is incumbent on every gnostic (*ʿārif*). Divine matters are not always perfectly plain to gnostics even when these matters are themselves utterly clear. Rather, the gnostic seems to stand behind a fine veil that is not fully transparent; it is blemished by the specks of vain imaginings (*taḫayyulāt*).[61]

Further, revelation of all that is concealed does not happen in one's worldly life. Rather, "Complete clarity comes about through direct vision (*mušāhada*) and the perfected radiance of complete revelation, but this happens only in the hereafter."[62] Thus, even if the object of desire can be attained (something al-Ġazālī has not yet affirmed or denied), it cannot happen while one is alive. For this reason, desire for God is necessary.

The second type of desire is due to the fact that "divine matters are infinite and unbounded," such that the gnostic knows that there will always be infinite details about the divine that will be unknown to him, although they are known to God.[63] Here, al-Ġazālī indeed denies that one can satisfy desire for God completely, because God is indeed unattainable in His fullness. Of the gnostic, he claims, "He desires incessantly to acquire some primary, as-yet-unattained knowledge (*maʿrifa*) of all remaining things knowable and which he knows not in the least, either clearly or even dimly."[64] Unlike the first kind of desire, this desire is proper only to desire for God and divine matters.

Al-Ġazālī next explains the ways in which these desires may come to fulfillment. The first desire, that due to concealment, is able to be fulfilled, although it happens only in the next world. He specifies this experience as a fulfillment, "in the sense that it is termed, 'vision' (*rawīya*), 'encounter' (*liqā'*) and 'witnessing' (*mušāhada*)."[65] However, he explains that the second type of desire, that due to the nature of God and divine matters, has no end.

> The second desire appears to have no end, either in this world or in the next, since any end would imply that in the next world God's majesty and His attributes, His wisdom and His acts, as they are known to God Himself, would be disclosed to [his] servant. This is impossible because such

61 al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 2619; *Al-Ghazali on Love* 89. Recall Ibn Bāǧǧa's rejection of the Sufis on the same grounds, above pp. 168–171.

62 al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 2619; *Al-Ghazali on Love* 89.

63 al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 2619; *Al-Ghazali on Love* 89–90.

64 al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 2619; *Al-Ghazali on Love* 90.

65 al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 2619; *Al-Ghazali on Love* 90.

> knowledge is infinite. Hence, [his] servant remains constantly aware that something in the divine beauty and grandeur remains irreducibly inexplicable.[66]

The infinite nature of God can never be experienced by the finite mind, so that even after death, it is impossible for one to grasp fully that which one has desired. In this way, in the second type of desire for God, the object is never fully attained. Al-Ġazālī's final comment on this point is important. He claims that the seeker's desire is not painful, but pleasurable. For, even though the desire cannot be stilled, the seeker still learns and obtains deeper and deeper understanding of God. "It is very probable that the twin graces of disclosure (*al-kašf*) and contemplation (*al-naẓar*) continue infinitely, just as bliss and pleasure keep increasing forever and ever."[67] This second type of desire, insofar as its object is God alone, can never be fully satisfied, only deepened and made pleasurable by that object's nature. Although the desire itself is not pleasurable, al-Ġazālī emphasizes that the discomfort attendant upon it is overpowered by the pleasure and delight of deeper understanding of God.

On the point of concealment, Avicenna's and al-Ġazālī's discussions of *šawq* overlap. In his discussion of the eighth class of knowers in his *Remarks and Admonitions*, Avicenna discusses the difference between desire, *šawq*, and love, *ʿišq*, in the eighteenth chapter on the levels of joy. Of desire, he claims the following.

> [Desire] is the movement toward completing this joy if the concept (*ṣūra*) is represented from one aspect (as it is represented in the imagination), and not represented from another aspect (as it happens to be not represented in the senses, that is, in the manner in which a sensible thing has a complete sensible representation). Thus, every being that desires has already attained a certain thing while missing out on a certain other thing.[68]

Avicenna discusses love as something distinct, and although we do not find Ibn Ṭufayl discussing love, this use of desire he clearly shares with Avicenna and al-Ġazālī both. Avicenna does not characterize this desire as of the First Cause

66 al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 2620; *Al-Ghazali on Love* 90.

67 al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 2620; *Al-Ghazali on Love* 90.

68 Avicenna, *al-Išārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, 41; *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism*, 79, altered.

particularly, and in general in this chapter and the following admonition, he discusses desire and love in terms of natural perfections, similar to what we read in his *Treatise on Love*.

There are also immediate points of overlap and divergence between al-Ġazālī and Ibn Ṭufayl's paradigms. Besides the evident overlap in desire terminology, there is the shared use of apprehension, *idrāk*, as the means of attaining that for which one yearns, and the use of witnessing, *mušāhada*, as the goal of the desire. The use of these concepts is of course also shared by Avicenna, but the explicitly mystical use Ibn Ṭufayl puts them to is not evident in Avicenna's own usage. Both terms are based on the sight analogy underlying the discussion of the aspirant's connection with God, which again Avicenna, al-Ġazālī, and Ibn Ṭufayl all share. In fact, the shared concepts between Avicenna and al-Ġazālī perhaps encouraged Ibn Ṭufayl to combine them in the first place. The most significant point of divergence is that al-Ġazālī has a twofold division of desire, which Ibn Ṭufayl's description lacks. However, this division concerns the special nature of desire for God in particular, which does connect it to Ibn Ṭufayl's text. This point is crucial for Ibn Ṭufayl's account, and his decision to include such a desire is responsible for ensuring that this account is an inherent one. For the special desire for God ensures these features of an inherent model of desire: that the desire is necessary, that the desire is never ending and that the desire has only one object. But when Ibn Ṭufayl discusses the human power for witnessing God, he seems to speak of desire—and its satisfaction—as if it were a zero-sum game: the power that desires can apprehend either potentially or actually, and when it apprehends potentially it desires its object, and when it apprehends it actually it does not. Given this way of framing human desire, one may think that al-Ġazālī's division of desire as due either to concealment or to infinite beauty does not resonate with Ibn Ṭufayl's portrayal. But if we take a step back and examine the global role of desire, *tašawwuq*, in Ḥayy's progression toward the Agent, the picture looks more nuanced than the discussion of desire and power would suggest. Ḥayy's desire toward the truth, *al-ḥaqq*, is not something that begins in its fully matured form. Rather, it must develop along a trajectory, and it begins at the moment Ḥayy has his first, rudimentary realization of the notion of agency. After his doe mother dies, he realizes that she was not what he had believed her to be: she was not her body, and her actions were due to something else, which he could not completely conceptualize. Nevertheless, he desired it. His educational goals then progress in a process that clarifies what that element is, first identifying it as the spirit that lives in the heart before settling on soul or form. This second identification is also supposed to account for the actions of all things having form. At last, Ḥayy finally realizes that there is *one* Agent responsible for actions, and indeed for all that is. Every

time he realizes a new aspect of agency or causality, his desire becomes more focused, until it intensifies into a burning desire as he becomes aware of the Necessary Existent as such. Considered along *this* trajectory, Ibn Ṭufayl's portrayal of desire owes much to al-Ġazālī's account of desire, insofar as Ḥayy must incrementally uncover that which he desires, starting with the innate heat he searched for in the doe's heart. His power for apprehending this object, which Ibn Ṭufayl also refers to as the heart (*bāl* or *qalb*), was initially awakened with his awareness of the reality of his doe mother, whom he loved and for whom he desired after her death. Further, Ibn Ṭufayl makes clear from the very beginning that the object of study, which becomes the object of Ḥayy's pursuit, is infinite.[69] His later portrayal of Ḥayy's experience of the truth or the First Agent further clarifies the infinite nature of this agent.

## 3 Appetite and Dissection

Before moving on to discuss the goal of Ḥayy's education, we must examine a period of his life sits uneasily next to the rest of his educational endeavors. Thus, we turn now to examine the other kind of desire that Ibn Ṭufayl uses consistently in the text: appetite, *šahwa*. This desire is at work while Ḥayy extensively dissects (and even vivisects) animals. Ibn Ṭufayl systematically uses the term *šahwa* to connote desire in the sense of passion, appetite, or lust. As a result, he exploits the characteristically negative connotation of the word: it does not aim at the good, but at apparent goods (although Ibn Ṭufayl does not ever speak of it in terms of the good). He uses this term only six times. The introduction of *šahwa* occurs when Ḥayy, having discovered fire, happens to throw a fish into the flames, and discovers an appetite in himself for meat: "As it began to roast and the savory odors spread, his appetite (*šahwa*) was aroused."[70] The use of *šahwa* to indicate appetite, specifically as a bodily impulse toward a desired object, occurs three additional times, when Ḥayy discovers the appetite for "food, water, mates, shade, and shelter" to be common to every animal, and then twice when he condemns the inhabitants of Absāl's island for their moral failure, claiming that "they had made their passions (*šahawāt*) their god" and that the worst life was one that failed to go beyond "satisfying some lust (*šahwa*)."[71] The other two appearances of *šahwa* concern Ḥayy's program of dissection, although appetite does not accompany all instances of dissection. His

69 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 11.

70 Ibn Ṭufayl, 49.

71 Ibn Ṭufayl, 98, 151, 153, respectively.

obsession with dissection is one of the most disconcerting parts of the text, especially given that his first post-mortem is performed on his adoptive doe mother. By looking at these passages more closely, I argue that we find an ultimately negative appraisal of Ḥayy's dissection program on Ibn Ṭufayl's part.

Ibn Ṭufayl discusses Ḥayy's appetite for understanding animal organs, which he satisfies with dissection, *tašrīḥ*. Ibn Ṭufayl discusses Ḥayy's dissective inquiry and procedure in detail, but the goal of such inquiry is not always clear. The first instance of dissection properly speaking follows the arousal of Ḥayy's appetite for meat.

> An appetite (*šahwa*) was aroused in him for research (*li-l-baḥṯ*) into all the other animal organs, their organization, placement, number, and interdependence, how the heat of that steam reaches them, giving life to them all, how it lasts as long as it does, where it comes from, and why its heat does not dissipate. He followed this up by dissection (*bi-tašrīḥ*) animals living or dead.[72]

The second passage is found five pages later, as Ibn Ṭufayl explains Ḥayy's accomplishments in his concentration on natural philosophy. After an overview of everything Ḥayy has learned by age twenty-one, Ibn Ṭufayl characterizes his motivation as follows.

> He accomplished all these things during the time when he was still engrossed with dissection (*bi-l-tašrīḥ*) and his one great appetite (*šahwa*) was in grasping the differentiation and the characteristic functions of all animal organs … ending [at] his twenty-first year. At this point he took up another tack.[73]

In both passages, Ḥayy's appetite is for researching or grasping the inner workings of animal bodies, which he furthers by dissecting animal bodies. Two things point to a negative appraisal of Ḥayy's *šahwa*. The first point is Ibn Ṭufayl's usage of *šahwa* in the first place with respect to the way he uses the term in the rest of the text, i.e. in a uniformly negative way. Rather than discuss a desire (*šawq*) for dissection, Ibn Ṭufayl identifies it always as an appetite. The second point is that although this enterprise eventually provides fodder for Ḥayy's reflections, it does not advance his understanding of essence, the Truth,

72 Ibn Ṭufayl, 50.

73 Ibn Ṭufayl, 55.

but, rather, details the body as an extension of the intuition he had at age seven. The dissections may deepen his understanding of 'spirit', but it is not dissection that moves him beyond the notion of 'spirit' to 'soul'. For that, natural philosophical reasoning concerning the nature of body as such is responsible.

There is another, certainly more disturbing, difficulty concerning Ḥayy's temporary obsession with dissection, namely, in what way one ought to understand his dissection of the doe as he endeavors to save her after her death. This dissection has in large part proven to be a sticking point for interpreters owing to its apparent severity and callousness. In his attempt to save his mother, Ḥayy both destroys her body, and appears to treat the dissection as an end in itself. Kukkonen highlights this aspect best, observing that Ḥayy's attempt to save his ailing mother, "seems to be lost halfway through," and that "Ḥayy, or the author, becomes so engrossed in recounting the intricacies of the heart that when … it finally comes to assessing whether any hope remains for the subject, the notion registers as little more than an afterthought, and a cold and impersonal one at that."[74] Malti-Douglas reads Ḥayy's dissection of the doe as an act of domination, claiming that, "The precocious Ḥayy proceeds to dissect her to discover the cause of her demise, and we understand this act as a furthering of his own scientific knowledge."[75] Even though this dissection forms the foundation for later acts of dissection, it is different in kind than Ḥayy's later dissections (although Kukkonen's point that the author gets lost in his explanation of the heart is well taken). Yes, Ḥayy learns much about the anatomy of animal organs in this dissective act, but the purpose, as Ibn Ṭufayl tells us, of Ḥayy's actions is to restore the doe to health. After the doe becomes unresponsive, that is, after she dies due to old age, Ḥayy examines her in order to "discover the place where she was hurt so he could take away the

74 Kukkonen, "No Man Is an Island," 190.

75 Malti-Douglas, "*Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān* as Male Utopia," 61–62. Malti-Douglas reads the lack of a biological mother in the narrative to be in part constitutive of the concept of this male utopia. But the reductive conception of motherhood in this reading misses the point, and because it reduces the concept of motherhood to a biological one, it obfuscates the fact that Ḥayy's adoptive mother teaches him to survive on his own, is the subject of his first imitative endeavor, and, on my reading, continues to be the object of his desire, eventually being identified with God (more on this below). It is worth acknowledging what will later become commonplace in England during the 16th and 17th centuries: the frequent and public anatomization of female bodies ostensibly for the sake of furthering natural science. On this practice, see Park's *Secrets of Women*, specifically ch. 5. Such a procedure was not, to our knowledge, taking place in Islamic society at large or in al-Andalus. I think we ought to be circumspect in reading this particular sort of systemic subjugation of the female body *back* into an earlier time and place.

hurt and allow her to recover."[76] In turn, when he realized the damage must be internal, he hesitated to operate: "He tried to think whether he had ever seen any animal recover from such a state; and, unable to do so, he lost hope of her getting better unless he did something."[77] It is not until *after* he sees the empty left ventricle that he realizes that his doe mother has in fact died: "Realizing that whatever had lived in that chamber had left while its house was intact, before it had been ruined, Ḥayy saw that it was hardly likely to return after all the cutting and destruction."[78] At this point, Ḥayy makes a distinction between what the doe really is, and the body that lies in front of him. After he realizes the doe's body is *not* identical to the doe herself, he leaves it behind, and instead contemplates on what he now considers to be the true nature of his mother.[79] Since Ḥayy's endeavor is to save the doe, this act of dissective surgery is a primitive medical procedure, not simply an act of dissection.

The ambiguity between Ḥayy the physician and Ḥayy the natural philosopher should not surprise us, since there was already a long-standing overlap between the higher strata of medicine and the lower strata of natural philosophy. Ibn Ṭufayl's placement of dissection within medicine follows the commitment of Andalusī physicians to the necessity of anatomy as an integral and initial part of medicine as such, while the seamless continuation of medicine into natural science reflects an Avicennan commitment to dissection as proper to medicine *and* natural science, as evidenced by his *Canon of Medicine* (*Qanūn fī l-ṭibb*) and *Book of Animals* (*Kitāb al-ḥayawān*).[80] Richter-Bernburg argues that Ibn Ṭufayl "generally reduces the role of medicine as an empirical discipline to that of a handmaiden to philosophical theory."[81] He identifies, "the sources of Ibn Ṭufayl's outlook on medicine in *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān* … to be found in al-Fārābī's and Ibn Sina's separation between medicine as an epistemologically inferior and application-oriented discipline on the one hand, and propaedeutic theoretical basis, considered part of natural philosophy, on the other."[82] The higher branch of medicine, that which was part of natural philosophy, "fell

76 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 28.

77 Ibn Ṭufayl, 41.

78 Ibn Ṭufayl, 44–45.

79 Ibn Ṭufayl, 46.

80 This organization is found in al-Zahrawi, Ibn Zuhr, and Averroes, although Ibn al-Nafis denies practicing dissection (dubiously). See Savage-Smith, "Attitudes Toward Dissection in Medieval Islam." For Ibn Bāğğa on dissection, see Forcada, "Ibn Bājja on Medicine," 134–139.

81 Richter-Bernburg, "Medicina ancillae philosophiae," 92. On this point see also Kukkonen, "Heart, Spirit, Form, Substance," 198–200.

82 Richter-Bernburg 94.

within the philosopher's purview."[83] Ibn Ṭufayl also follows the Arabic Aristotelian rebuttal against Galenic science, and subordinates anatomy, with its concentration on particulars, to natural philosophy's investigation into universals.[84] In addition to Richter-Bernburg's analysis, it is important to highlight that in Avicenna's own commentary on animals in the *Healing*, there is a large overlap between medicine and natural philosophy, insofar his *Book of Animals* shares much material with his *Canon*. Musallam estimates that 40 % of his *Book of Animals* is from the *Canon*, such that "the space devoted to anatomy was more than doubled."[85] Of course, Ibn Ṭufayl, being a doctor (and clearly a successful one at that), was familiar with many medical texts; in fact, the only other known surviving work of his are instructional verses on medicine.[86] But his blending of medical procedure with the investigations of natural philosophy suggests Ibn Ṭufayl's devotion to Avicenna might have held strong even on this point. A useful contrast case is Ibn Bāǧǧa's own commentary on Aristotle's *Book of Animals*, in which he focuses largely on the theoretical points of the text and takes great pains to understand the study of animals as a science.[87] Thus, it is evident that philosophical texts that straddle the gray area between medicine and philosophy were not uniform in their attention to anatomical detail. Even though the post-mortem of the doe is harsh, Ibn Ṭufayl is clear that Ḥayy does not realize the doe is dead until he has examined her heart. After this realization, he ceases his examination of the body, and continues to think about his mother, wondering for what reason and to what place she has gone.

How, then, should we understand the role of dissection in relation to the rest of Ḥayy's education? I propose that we assess the rest of Ḥayy's dissective practice under the criterion of whether it aids in the broader education (which I will examine at length in the next section). We find that, at the end of his twenty-first year, before he moves on to other considerations, Ḥayy has not progressed beyond the notion of spirit, of which he initially conceived in his examination of the doe. However, this notion has been specified during the fourteen years between the doe's death and his promotion beyond natural science. In fact, when Ibn Ṭufayl enumerates the things that Ḥayy has learned during this time, he explains them such that they form a more exact and sophisticated account of death. He explains as follows.

83 Richter-Bernburg, 95.

84 Richter-Bernburg, 95–96.

85 Musallam, "AVICENNA x. Medicine and Biology."

86 For a reference for these verses, see Kukkonen, "Heart, Spirit, Form, Substance," 197fn12.

87 See Kruk, "Ibn Bāǧǧa's commentary on Aristotle's *De animalibus*", 165–179. Also cf. Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Kitāb al-ḥayawān*, 73–84.

> Every one of these organs is at the service of the spirit and would be deprived of its functions were it not directed by this spirit through what we call the nerves: for when nerve pathways are cut or blocked, the functions lapse in the organ to which they lead. These nerves do no more than transmit the animal spirit emanating from the brain, which in turn derives it from the heart … If for some reason any organ does not receive this spirit, like a useless, discarded tool, it can work no longer. And should the vital spirit leave the body altogether or in one way or another disintegrate or become extinct, the whole body is stilled and dies.[88]

His dissections, no longer acts of medicine, have to a great extent still been directed at understanding what happened in the death of the doe. Ibn Ṭufayl makes clear in this passage that Ḥayy's conclusion have focused on the role of the animal spirit in the body and the results of the termination of the spirit's residence in the body. His investigation of fire similarly concerns understanding the incident of the doe's death, an investigation that leads to the vivisection of some unfortunate beast. The result of this vivisection is Ḥayy's conclusion that the spirit in the heart is like fire, and that, "when this departs, the animal dies."[89] All of these conclusions are within the material sphere, and do not propel him toward his next point of progression in his education aimed at witnessing the True Agent. It is only in the summary of Ḥayy's progress before he proceeds that Ibn Ṭufayl finally gives "spirit," the vehicle of life in the body, its name at all. Ḥayy moves on from a materialist understanding of the user of the body only *after* he has "taken up another tack" at the end of twenty-one years. Thus, the dissections undertaken by Ḥayy appear to be peripheral to his real task, perhaps the kind of theoretical propaedeutic Richter-Bernburg discusses. Ibn Ṭufayl clearly sees them as necessary for Ḥayy, if only because no seven-year-old is prepared to take up consideration of forms, the soul, and divine unity. Here I think we find the motivation for Ibn Ṭufayl's implicitly negative estimation of dissection, that it is driven by appetite, *šahwa*, in the first place. I suspect that it is because of its subsidiary nature that Ibn Ṭufayl flags the impetus behind dissection pejoratively. Strictly speaking, Ḥayy's post-doe dissections are, to some extent, extraneous to his true goal, and he risks being dragged into it longer than necessary. During the time in which he is driven by his appetite for understanding animal organs, Ḥayy becomes a predator, consuming whatever animals he pleases—whether it be by hunting, feeding, or

88 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 52.

89 Ibn Ṭufayl, 50.

dissecting.[90] This consumption is not what we find in the dissection of the doe. Even though Ḥayy learns about the make-up of natural bodies in his attempt to restore the doe to health, he is not consuming her body for the sake of knowledge, but trying to heal her. From his change of pursuit in his twenty-first year, Ḥayy turns away from such pursuits and focuses on understanding the notion of the agent, rather than focusing on what happens when the agent leaves the body. Having distinguished between these two different kinds of desire, let us now turn to examine the way in which they indicate and function within the overall structure of Ḥayy's pursuits.

## 4 Holistic Goal of Ḥayy's Education

This desire I have discussed so far is the driving force of Ḥayy's life and education—these are practically synonyms, as he spends most of his life learning. This education culminates in his attempts to witness the Necessary Existent. In general, most of the steps Ḥayy takes in his life are directed toward and organized according to his realization of the Necessary Existent, whose effects are seen throughout the world. But even before the beginning of the actual tale of *Ḥayy*, Ibn Ṭufayl makes clear in his introduction that the goal of the story is to show the level of friendship, *ṭawr wilāya*, which consists in witnessing, *mušāhada*, the Necessary Existent.[91] This goal is an experience to which Ibn Ṭufayl aims to lead the reader: "So that you witness (*tušāhidu*) something of that which we witnessed (*šāhadnāhu*) and you verify (*tataḥaqqaqu*) by your own sight all of what we verified (*taḥaqqaqnāhu*)."[92] Examination of the vocabulary of desire has shown that Ibn Ṭufayl uses *šawq* and its derivatives in such a way that he indeed reproduces in Ḥayy what he said he aimed to produce in the reader of the text, namely, desire for the path toward truth. For we saw that Ibn Ṭufayl marks the basic shifts in Ḥayy's pursuit of an experience of the Necessary Existent with desire, which is redirected and redefined when Ḥayy discovers spirit, soul, and the Agent itself. I will argue in this section that Ḥayy's intellectual development forms a coherent whole, rather than a curriculum cut into two halves, one before and one after he comes to his conclusions regarding the Necessary Existent. Once Ḥayy's realization of the Necessary Existent is posited as the completion of an already ongoing

90 Ibn Ṭufayl, 49, 53–54.
91 Ibn Ṭufayl, 4, 9, 11, 19.
92 Ibn Ṭufayl, 19.

search, it is clear that his education is a unified whole that proceeds according to the threefold structure marked by his discoveries of spirit, soul, and the Agent. At each of these points, his conception of the truth is specified, and he progresses forward along a path toward his eventual witnessing of the Agent.

Let me briefly summarize what we have seen so far. In his realization of spirit, which actually occurs *before* he gives it a name, Ḥayy realizes that the external, visible body (in this case, of the doe), is not what an animal *is*. Rather, the animal is something that lives inside the heart. After clarifying this point for about fourteen years, he identifies it as the fiery spirit that gives vital heat to the rest of the body and directs the body by way of the nerves.[93] With spirit, he conceives of the self as physical. By contrast, the later notion of soul specifies this earlier conception, awakens him to the non-physical, and introduces him to formal distinctions. It shows him that spirit is twofold, with one corporeal non-specific part and one that is proper to the individual in kind.[94] His conception of soul is the conclusion of his initial awareness of the spiritual world (*al-ʿālam al-rūḥāniyya*) and of forms of bodies (*ṣuwar al-ajsām*).[95] His final realization is consequent on his awareness that each form must have a cause. This conclusion rests on a specific definition of form.

> He then considered the possessors of forms (*ḏawāt al-ṣuwar*) and saw nothing more than a body's propensity (*istiʿdād*) for such and such an action to arise from it. Water, for example, has a propensity to rise when strongly heated. This propensity is the form, for there is nothing there but body and certain perceptible things—qualities and ways of moving, for example—which come into being, and the cause who creates them. Thus the susceptibility of a body to certain kinds of motion as opposed to others must be its propensity or form.[96]

The account may at first appear to be materialist, but we must remember two qualifications of form Ibn Ṭufayl has already made. When he introduced the concepts of form and soul—Ḥayy's first glimpse into the spiritual world—he identifies form with the animal soul (*al-nafs al-ḥayawāniyya*) after connecting it to the spirit that resides in the heart:

93 Ibn Ṭufayl, 52.
94 Ibn Ṭufayl., 65.
95 Ibn Ṭufayl, 64.
96 Ibn Ṭufayl, 73–74. There is a textual problem here, and the propensity may be *due to* its form (*bi-ṣūratihī*), rather than its form.

> It dawned on him that the animal spirit (*al-rūḥ al-ḥayawānī*) which lives in the heart and at which he had first probed with his dissections, must itself have a notion added to its corporeality which would enable it to carry out its wonderful tasks of the various modes of sensing, apprehending, and moving.[97]

From these two qualifications—that soul is (1) a principle for the spirit and (2) equivalent to form—Ibn Ṭufayl's identification of form with propensity is not surprising. After this identification, he offers a Ġazālian understanding of the causal source responsible for actions that appear to manifest from this newly-identified form.

> Ḥayy realized that the same would be true of all forms. Clearly the acts (*afʿāl*) emerging from forms were not in reality by them, but the actions attributed to them were brought about through them by an acting agent (*li-fāʿil yafʿalu*). This idea to which he had now awakened is the meaning of the Prophet's words: "I am the ears He hears by and the sight He sees by." As it is written in the unshakable Revelation, "It was not you but God who killed them; and when you shot, it was not you who shot, but God."[98]

Ḥayy now concludes that the ultimate agent responsible for all actions is God himself. This is the third and last of his realizations concerning the true nature of the world, and Ibn Ṭufayl adduces a hadith and a Qurʾānic verse (sūra 8:17) in support of this thesis. Al-Ġazālī cites this same verse in his Book 35 of his *Revival*, in his own account of causality.[99] Ibn Ṭufayl continues to utilize this same account of causality through the rest of the text. After coming to this realization in general (*ʿalā l-ijmāl*), Ḥayy now has an urgent desire (*šawq ḥaṭīṭ*) for knowing the Agent in detail (*ʿalā l-tafṣīl*), since, at this point, he has only a general impression.[100] Ibn Ṭufayl's description of the object Ḥayy desires using terms that reference greater or lesser clarity is clearly consonant with al-Ġazālī's conception of desire for God, especially the role of concealment.

If we are correct in reading Ḥayy's education as tripartite in this way, what then are we to make of Ḥayy's investigations that do not appear to fit into this specific account of education? Ibn Ṭufayl makes explicit in his prologue that his

97 Ibn Ṭufayl, 64.
98 Ibn Ṭufayl, 74.
99 al-Ġazālī, *Ihyaʾ*, 2506.
100 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 74.

goal is to go beyond merely theoretical endeavors and rational inquiry. Further, the goal is not *knowledge* of the Agent, but an actual experience of the Agent. However, I need to account for the way in which Ḥayy's straightforwardly theoretical inquiries are related to those inquiries I am arguing are essentially constitutive of Ḥayy's goal in the way I have argued (that is, the development of his understanding of agency and the ultimate agent). Let us take as an example Ḥayy's investigation into the question of the eternity of the world.[101] After running through arguments for and against the eternity of the world, Ḥayy comes to the conclusion that regardless of whether he assumes the eternity or non-eternity of the world, he reaches the same Agent responsible for it. Since he aimed to understand the Agent through this investigation, the question of which paradigm was correct was moot, since each investigation reached the same conclusion: "He was no longer troubled by the dilemmas of creation versus eternity, for either way the existence of a non-corporeal Agent remained unscathed."[102] The nature of this investigation is indicative of the others. For, in general, the investigations Ḥayy undertakes after he moves on from the notion of spirit serve his ultimate end of determining the true meaning of agency and identifying the true Agent. Separating the features of bodily nature and non-bodily nature, identifying the causal power of soul, exposing the various kinds of unity that exist in the world—all of these ultimately serve to deepen Ḥayy's understanding of the ultimate agent.

This structure becomes clearer when we examine the way in which his various intellectual pursuits contribute to the rich concept of agency at which Ḥayy arrives. Since I examined his progress until his twenty-first year in the previous section, let us begin with his examination from that point, at which his conception of the agent of the body has been called spirit. The next large portion of his studies stops just before he reaches consideration of the heavens. During this interim period, Ḥayy examines the various ways things are one and many, beginning with the oneness of his self (due to his spirit), leading to the realization of principles (or causes or agents) that account for the specific kind of unity things have, and bringing him to the realization that animal spirit itself has a principle and cause, which he calls the soul.[103] Each of these steps has deepened his understanding of the notion of cause, principle, or that which is responsible for something being what it is and doing what it does. Next, he examines the various powers of the soul, and traces those powers to their

101 See Kukkonen, *Ibn Tufayl*, ch. 4–6.

102 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 86.

103 Ibn Ṭufayl, 56, 57–59, 65–66, respectively.

limits by examining matter and the very notion of extension.[104] This discussion launches him into the world of mind, and after reflection on substantial change, he arrives at the awareness of the First Cause, the True Agent.[105] At this point, he turns to examine the heavens, aged twenty-eight. His examination of the heavens centers around the question of infinity, both with respect to the various heavenly bodies and the world as a whole. In the former case, Ḥayy continues his examination in terms of oneness, positing that the world resembles an animal, again highlighting the unified causal force behind the world as a whole. He then considers whether the world comes about ex nihilo for several years. Ḥayy dismisses the details, having concluded that either way, there must be a cause responsible for the creation of the world.[106] Again, the agency or causality behind the world is his target. Finally, he understands each thing within the world as an effect of this one cause, summarizing the years' worth of inquiry he undertook. Ibn Ṭufayl spends several pages remarking on the nature of the relationship between this cause and its effects, and identifies perfection as the touchpoint of the First Cause's effectivity within creation. The effects Ḥayy sees in the world must, he concludes, come "from an agent in the utmost degree of perfection, even beyond perfection."[107] The perfection of and from the First Cause suffuses the world, and thus Ḥayy sees the First Cause everywhere in everything. With each new level of investigation, Ḥayy pushed deeper into the notion of agency in order to understand what it is that is real in what he sees, and all of this inquiry began with the doe in the search for his mother. At this point of the narrative, Ḥayy focuses on deepening his understanding of the First Creator more specifically, after the sum of his previous investigations led him to this point.

Ḥayy's intellectual progression has not been characterized quite this way in the literature. Along with the thematization of desire the notion of agency has not been extensively appreciated outside of the explicit entrance of the First Agent, which as I have argued *concludes*, rather than introduces, the notion of agency. Kukkonen highlights the importance of the agent for the progression of Ḥayy's journey as follows.

> Hayy's story pivots on his realization that a transcendent agent is responsible for the existence of everything in the cosmos. Before this conceptual leap is made, Hayy's thirst for knowledge is portrayed in terms of a natural

104 Ibn Ṭufayl, 67–68, 69–72, respectively.
105 Ibn Ṭufayl, 72, 73–74, 74, respectively.
106 Ibn Ṭufayl, 81–83, conclusion on 86.
107 Ibn Ṭufayl, 88, my translation.

> drive peculiar to the human observer … [and] Hayy simply absorbs information from every direction without ever pausing to wonder how or why this happens. As a consequence, the reader, too, is left in the dark when it comes to such matters.[108]

Germann similarly highlights that Ḥayy's investigation in the First Cause begins in his 35th year.[109] However, if we understand Ḥayy's education according to the development of his desire, which aims to understand and to grasp the notion of agency, as I have argued, then we have a structure according to which the entirety of Ḥayy's progression may become unified and coherent. Further, connecting this reading to Ibn Ṭufayl's claims in the prologue and epilogue, it offers a clear view to the reader of an Agent-infused world and the path toward the goal Ibn Ṭufayl wants us to desire when reading the text. To some extent, this progression of Ḥayy's education confirms what Wirmer above calls the Almohadization of desire, since the educative path I have outlined seamlessly connects Aristotelian science with witnessing God, with the same human desire active the entire time.[110] I see this interpretation as complementary to Kukkonen's own, insofar as desire and its object (the agent) ground and organize Ḥayy's scientific studies by connecting them to his goal—the apprehension of the First Cause. Rather than a sudden turn at the introduction of the transcendent Agent, this introduction is the consummation of the investigations Ḥayy undertook since the beginning. As a result, his inquiries prior to the mimetic exercises, at which such inquiries ceased, are yet constitutive of those exercises since, as Germann has pointed out, he required the knowledge he gained in order to construct his mimetic exercises in the first place.[111] This interpretation that prioritizes the centrality of desire and the object at which it aims should be kept distinct from an interpretation that Kukkonen rightly criticizes, namely, that Ibn Ṭufayl "guid[es] his readers through the world only in order to get at God."[112] It is true that the interpretation I have put forward is driven by and centered around the notion of an agent that is ultimately God. But this

108 Kukkonen, *Ibn Tufayl*, 79.

109 Germann, "Philosophizing without Philosophy?" 283.

110 See above, p. 204.

111 Germann, "Philosophizing without Philosophy?" 294.

112 Kukkonen, *Ibn Tufayl*, 50. This interpretation is the same or similar to one Kukkonen highlights at the beginning of his "Heart, Spirit, Form, Substance," which, according to Kukkonen, goes back to Ibn al-Ḫaṭīb, and has the entire text building toward a mystical "predetermined climax." It should be sufficiently clear that my interpretation does not fall into this category either, since the end of Ḥayy's spiritual journey is only part of an agent-infused world.

search includes the whole of philosophical investigation as *constitutive* of that other inquiry and of the reality in which Ḥayy is interested, since every object of study is itself an effect of the agent that interests Ḥayy, and in turn something that informs Ḥayy's view of God. As a result, scientific inquiry and the individual objects of investigation are still valuable for their own sake, not merely as a narrative means to an end. Indeed, it is on this point that I think Ibn Ṭufayl joins Avicennan science with al-Ġazālī's theology, this commitment to science being perhaps the strongest ground on which Ibn Ṭufayl can lay claim to being part of the Aristotelian tradition. Let us look now more closely at what experiences this ultimate end, namely, the essence of Ḥayy's inquiry and the subject of education—his own self.

## 5 Subject of Education, Subject of Desire

Although much of the narrative of *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān* is the story of Ḥayy's education, it is not always clear what exactly the subject of education is throughout the text. Although we have variegated references throughout to Ḥayy's heart, mind, and power for witnessing God, Ibn Ṭufayl appears to be inconsistent in his portrayal of Ḥayy as a *subject* of education. Thus, it would take us some way to determine more precisely what this subject is. Doing so will clarify the relation of desire to this subject and in turn the role of desire in the witnessing of the First Agent. A basic difficulty for such an undertaking is that Ibn Ṭufayl does not offer a clear psychology in *Ḥayy*.[113] The discovery of the soul is one I highlighted above, but besides its identification with form, it is not specified further, and Ibn Ṭufayl's psychology must be extracted from glimpses offered throughout the text. Additionally, one does not find an explicit account of noetics in *Ḥayy*, although Ibn Ṭufayl will refer to the "world of mind."[114] However, as we saw above, Ibn Ṭufayl explicitly states that Ḥayy's true self is the power to witness the Necessary Existent, and thus this power is the ultimate subject of education.[115] In addition to and alongside this special power, Ḥayy's thought, *fikr*, must develop as a tool by means of which Ḥayy is able progress in his education. There is in turn an intimate connection between Ḥayy's thought and his power for witnessing the Agent, such that his thought helps to direct the

113 Already cited above, Kukkonen offers an extended discussion of Ibn Ṭufayl's psychology in his "Heart, Spirit, Form, Substance."

114 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 90. On the point of Ḥayy's noetics in relation to the goal of his inquiry, see Kukkonen, "Ibn Ṭufayl and the Wisdom of the East," 95–97.

115 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 92.

desire the power has for witnessing the First Cause. Nevertheless, Ibn Ṭufayl never identifies the two nor explicitly discusses their relation to one another. I will argue below that the same power is at work at each stages of education, and that this power is distinct from thought. Although thought is operative in each instance, one finds it connected to or serving another power at each integral moment of Ḥayy's awareness of the notion of essence and of agency. With the use of thinking, Ḥayy becomes aware of a more exact conception of agency at each turn, changes his attachment to that notion, desires it, and whatever he previously desired or was previously attached to fails to be valuable in his view.

Let us briefly revisit the progression of Ḥayy's uncovering of his self. The most extensive discussion of this essence occurs as Ibn Ṭufayl explains Ḥayy's wonder at the way in which he came to know the Necessary Existent. After ruling out that it could be the sensible part of him that made him aware of the non-sensible Agent, he connects whatever has made him aware of the Agent with his true self.

> It had already been made clear to him that he apprehended [the Agent] on the basis of his essence (*bi-ḏātihī*), and now that his understanding of Him was better, he recognized that this essence too, by which he had come to know Him, was non-corporeal and not qualifiable by any physical predicate … his true essence was that by which he had apprehended the Necessary Existent.[116]

Ibn Ṭufayl does not here offer the grounds on which Ḥayy makes his inference concerning his true self, namely, that it would be the same thing as that by which he apprehended the Agent, but leaves it open for us to complete. He implicitly relies on the principle that like is known by like.[117] Following this realization, Ḥayy concludes that his true self cannot perish, since it is non-sensible and does not decay.[118]

At this point in the text, we reach again Ibn Ṭufayl's lengthy discussion of the nature of power, *quwwa*, which I discussed above. The intellectual or thinking nature of the power Ibn Ṭufayl identifies as Ḥayy's self is clear. This power penetrates to the world of mind, it is satisfied by thinking, and it is the only non-physical power Ibn Ṭufayl identifies for Ḥayy. That Ibn Ṭufayl does not simply identify this power as mind or thinking is puzzling, as is his claim that

116 Ibn Ṭufayl, 92.
117 Taneli Kukkonen, "Ibn Ṭufayl and the Wisdom of the East," 96–97.
118 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 93.

he describes this feature as a power only metaphorically.[119] Kukkonen suggests that Ibn Ṭufayl might have used the term "simply to signal that when it comes to the domain of supernal cognition, neither the physicians, nor the philosophers, nor yet the Sufis had hit upon an altogether satisfactory formula."[120] Nevertheless, this "power" has several identifiable features: it thinks, has access to spiritual and intellectual objects or worlds, and desires specifically the First Cause. Ḥayy's thought, *fikr*, directs him throughout his intellectual and spiritual inquiries, and this thought works together with his desire and attachment to guide Ḥayy towards his goal. Major shifts of focus in Ḥayy's thinking occur according to the familiar threefold pattern. The first stage his thought reaches comes after he realizes that the doe is not her body, at which point he "confines [his] thought (*fikra*) to that thing," namely, that which had been in his mother's heart but left, which he later calls the animal spirit. After this realization, he begins "thinking (*yatafakkaru*) about that thing that controls the body," as he in turn desires and becomes attached to it rather than his mother's body.[121] In this first episode, we do not get a reference to another part of Ḥayy that is active outside of thinking. But we find this shift again when Ḥayy becomes aware of the existence of soul, as "he dropped the physical and attached his heart (*bāl*) on the second factor, which is designated as the soul … and he turned his thought (*fikra*) toward it."[122] As I discussed above, Ḥayy's desire and attachment change in turn, except that here we are told Ḥayy's heart is the subject of attachment. Finally, we find a similar characterization following Ḥayy's awareness of the true Agent, which he seeks to know. First, his thought is turned toward the heavenly bodies, and after astronomical reflection, he learns to see the Agent in each of its effects, such that

> Already this Agent was deeply rooted in his heart (*qalb*) [that] his thought (*fikra*) in each thing was occupied only with it … For now his eye fell on nothing without immediately detecting in it signs of His craft—then instantly his thought would shift from the crafted thing to Craftsman, until his desire for it intensified (*ištadda šawquhū*), and his heart was entirely removed from the world of sense (*al-ʿālam al-maḥsūs*), and attached to the mind (*al-ʿālam al-maqūl*).[123]

119 Ibn Ṭufayl, 5–6.
120 Kukkonen, "Heart, Spirit, Form, Substance," 214.
121 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 45–46.
122 Ibn Ṭufayl, 65–66.
123 Ibn Ṭufayl, 90.

Each new realization is a turning point in Ḥayy's thought, and he trains it until, in all cases, his thought is aware only of the Agent itself. Again, his heart is the subject Ibn Ṭufayl describes as being connected to the Agent and attached to it. Thinking helps to direct this heart, desiring following in turn. When Ibn Ṭufayl actually offers a description of the experience that has been the goal of Ḥayy's education, he says that Ḥayy's thought and remembrance, *ḏikr*, remain as a bridge between Ḥayy and the Agent.

> From his thought and his remembrance vanished heaven and earth and all that is between them, all of the spiritual forms and the bodily powers, all of the powers separate from matter, which are the essences that know the true Existent. And among all of these essences his essence vanished.[124]

This passage is important insofar as it makes clear that thought, *fikr*, remains, although it is free of content other than the Agent. Further, just before Ibn Ṭufayl describes the content of the truth that Ḥayy witnessed, he qualifies what he means by heart, *qalb*. He says, "Do not attach your heart (*taʿallaq qalbaka*) to a depiction of what has never been represented in the human heart. For many things that are articulate in the heart cannot be described."[125] Wanting to have a description of such a thing is impossible—"like wanting to taste colors, expecting black as such to taste either sweet or sour."[126] This explanation of heart further makes clear that, whatever the heart is, it seems to be the seat of the power for witnessing the Agent.

Problematically, the above passage also claims that Ḥayy's own essence, *ḏāt*, vanishes. Although Ibn Ṭufayl will modify this claim, initially it is unclear what such a claim could amount to, since presumably his essence, namely, his power to witness the Agent, would be fully active only during such an experience of witnessing. This experience becomes Ḥayy's obsession. We have seen that Ḥayy's desire becomes more intense the closer Ḥayy gets to the true notion of the Agent. In his discussion of power and desire, Ibn Ṭufayl remarks on the nature of the desire proper to any given power, claiming that, "According to the greater perfection, greater brilliance, and greater beauty the apprehended object has, the desire for it is greater, and the ache on account of its loss is more severe."[127] As a result of these considerations, Ḥayy concludes

124 Ibn Ṭufayl, 120, my translation.
125 Ibn Ṭufayl, 121.
126 Ibn Ṭufayl, 122.
127 Ibn Ṭufayl, 94, my translation.

that "self-realization and happiness meant constant actual experience of the Necessary Existent," and when he struggles to gain an awareness of the Agent before taking up his mimetic exercises, "he feared death might surprise him in a moment of distraction, leaving him to sink into the everlasting misery and torment of deprivation."[128] Ibn Ṭufayl's failure to identify the subject of this desire explicitly leaves the relation between the soul and the power for witnessing the Necessary Existent obscure, as I highlighted above. In turn we find Ibn Ṭufayl hedging about the exact relationship between Ḥayy's self and the True Agent.

Above, we found that *everything* vanishes in the experience of witnessing, *mušāhada*. In the pages following this realization, Ibn Ṭufayl describes Ḥayy's final but problematic realization of his true identity and true essence: he is in a way the same as the true essence, *ḏāt al-ḥaqq*, and in a way he is not. The exact nature of this identity relation is difficult, and Ibn Ṭufayl expresses himself carefully. He must account for the ontology of witnessing in such a way that he neither claims divinity for Ḥayy—as the Sufis did in their own (somewhat misguided) proclamations of mystic experience—nor fails to account for his supersession of the realm of those who stay within theoretical science. Ibn Ṭufayl attempts to account for this experience "by coining symbols, for there is no way of finding out what truly occurs at this plateau of experience besides reaching it."[129] Nevertheless, he attempts to give a presentation of what the experience is like, calling for caution: "For it is dangerous to make pronouncements on the ineffable, and the margins in which I work are narrow."[130]

After making explicit that the experience Ḥayy wished to have was additional to what he accomplished with theoretical reflection (*naẓar*), Ibn Ṭufayl describes Ḥayy's unity with the Agent.[131] We might remember here the distinction Gutas highlighted and described in Avicenna's thought between apprehension, *idrāk*, and witnessing, *mušāhada*. As I pointed out above, Ibn Ṭufayl might have garnered such a—at least superficially—similar distinction from Avicenna's *Pointers*, which mentions "the people of witnessing," *ahl al-mušāhada*.[132] In discussing the process of this witnessing, Ibn Ṭufayl identifies

128 Ibn Ṭufayl, 97.

129 Ibn Ṭufayl, 122.

130 Ibn Ṭufayl, 122.

131 This simultaneous distinction but interplay of the power for witnessing and thought bear out Ibn Ṭufayl's claim in the prologue that while the witnessing power is distinct from thought, there is not disagreement between the two powers. See Ibn Ṭufayl, 5.

132 Avicenna, *al-Išārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, 364.

Ḥayy's success within terms of annihilation of the self, *fanā'*: "He vanished from himself and from all other selves, and he saw in existence only the Everlasting One (*al-wāḥid al-qayyūm*), and he witnessed what he witnessed (*šāhada mā šāhada*)," clearly referencing al-Ġazālī's claim Ibn Ṭufayl quoted at the beginning of the prologue: "It was what it was."[133] This experience is like a state of drunkenness, and, after leaving this state, it occurs to Ḥayy that his essence and the true essence are one and the same (*ḥaqīqat ḏātihī hiya ḏāt al-ḥaqq*). He is convinced of the Agent's absolute unity, and after his experience feels entitled to extend this unity to himself. However, as Ibn Ṭufayl tells us, he catches himself: "This specious thinking might well have taken root in his soul, had not God in his mercy caught hold of him and guided him back to the truth."[134] He is reminded that the very categories of "one" and "many" are proper only to physical things, and therefore are simply inapplicable to his identification to the Agent. Rather than picking a side in the question of whether the aspirant fully does or does not become one with *ḏāt al-ḥaqq*, Ibn Ṭufayl altogether dismisses the question as a category mistake. Instead, he offers a mirror analogy.

> He saw a being corresponding to the highest sphere, beyond which there is no body, a subject free of matter, and neither identical with the Truth and the One nor with the sphere itself, nor distinct from either—as the form of the sun appearing in a polished mirror is neither sun nor mirror, and yet distinct from neither.[135]

Ibn Ṭufayl consistently rejects the notions of the "one" and the "many" in his discussion of this non-physical essence. Instead, he offers the image of light reflected into many mirrors: the mirrors themselves are many, but the light itself is the same. Nevertheless, since it is inflected into many mirrors, one would not want to call it "one" light. To do so would be to mischaracterize the nature of light. He emphasizes that one must not apply physical standards to one's understanding of the non-physical. Light shone into many mirrors is in a way the same light and in a way a different light. All the instantiations share the same nature, although they are present and exist in different ways. Ibn Ṭufayl embraces this apparent paradox, and tells us that trying to understand it exactly will result in failure and misunderstanding.

What then can we learn about the nature of the Ḥayy's self and the subject of education from this discussion? It is clear that Ibn Ṭufayl sees the education

133 Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 122 and 4, respectively, my translation.
134 Ibn Ṭufayl, 124.
135 Ibn Ṭufayl, 127.

of thought, *fikr*, as part and parcel of Ḥayy's philosophical education, and its development an important aspect of his philosophical and spiritual progress. As a result, Ḥayy's thought must be trained so that Ḥayy can utilize it in his search for the Truth, although it must be silent in order for Ḥayy to witness the Truth. The requirement that thought be silent in the purest act of comprehension prevents us from identifying it as the power in question. On this account, thought, being driven by desire, works as a tool for leading Ḥayy to his experience of the Agent, but one that in itself is insufficient. More fundamentally, Ḥayy's power for witnessing must itself be actualized as the true subject of education, and this power is actualized bit by bit with the adjustment of Ḥayy's thought at each new realization of the truth. In this way, Ḥayy's desire both grows and is satisfied at the unveiling of each newly revealed aspect of the Agent, after being awakened at the loss of the doe.

In accounting for this initial awakening, one can account for an oddity in the narrative, which is the extensive space and energy Ibn Ṭufayl devotes to the episode in which Ḥayy loses his doe mother. Ibn Ṭufayl spends many pages discussing the doe's death, from her twilight to her final dissection and burial. One may be tempted to dismiss this attention by allusion to narrative coherence: Ḥayy is cared for by the doe, so Ibn Ṭufayl must account for his separation from her. But this response is unsatisfactory. Ibn Ṭufayl is does not shy away from narrative dissonance—consider the two origin stories and the problematic reappearance of the ark. On this point, one may also adduce the way in which Ḥayy's former family of deer quickly disappear after the death of the doe. Ibn Ṭufayl could much more easily had Ḥayy wander away from the doe at age seven, independent and brash, and simply never mentioned her again. He also need not have discussed the connection between Ḥayy and the doe in such tender terms, making them inseparable, her his only companion. Further, Ḥayy's childhood, besides discussion involving the doe, is not given much specific attention. Given the fact that *Ḥayy* is a work of Arabic prose at the highest level, this episode warrants careful interpretation, as it is unlikely Ibn Ṭufayl included it without design. Considered within an Avicennan-Ġazālian account of desire for God, in order for Ḥayy to have desired the Agent, he must have had an incomplete apprehension of it. Since Ḥayy had no indication that his understanding of the object he loved was incomplete, it was necessary for Ḥayy to lose what he thought was certain. On this reading, Ibn Ṭufayl commits such detailed attention to the death of the doe because Ḥayy cannot begin to progress along his educative path until he loses her. The mechanism of Ḥayy's education is the desire (*tašawwuq*) and attachment (*taʿalluq*) that drives him toward the Necessary Existent, but in order for the desire to be activated in such a way that drives Ḥayy to action, it needs to have had and then to have

*lost* its object. On this account, the death of the doe marks the beginning of Ḥayy's path toward the One, and thus was Ibn Ṭufayl's motivation for spending so much time on the doe's death and depicting Ḥayy as being so distraught about it.

In his analysis of *Ḥayy*, the 14th-century Granadan polymath Ibn al-Ḫaṭīb interprets the doe as key to understanding the text, arguing similarly that Ḥayy's inquiry toward the Agent begins with her death. He describes the result of Ḥayy's examination of the heart of the doe in the following way.

> He saw that the parts of the body traced [back] to the heart, and it supported them from itself, so that he knew that that lamp was the hearth of that light that departed from [her], and the secret that was missing from [her], and he did not stop inquiring by thorough investigation until he knew the world of that secret. And he sought a proof (*istadalla*) about it from the exalted things and about them from it, and he sought a proof afterward by the trace of what he wanted until he knew himself.[136]

Ultimately, Ibn al-Ḫaṭīb sees Ḥayy as an Adam-like figure, citing the way in which Ḥayy guides and arranges creation as evidence. Interpretation of Ḥayy as the archetypal human being, in Ibn al-Ḫaṭīb's view as Adam, includes an additional motif, which is Adam's separation from God. Ibn al-Ḫaṭīb does not make this explicit in the above passage, but the notion of Adam's separation from God aligns with another, similar motif, which is the likeness of the individual's separation from God to the separation from one's mother. As I highlighted above, Ibn Ṭufayl's account of the doe follows this motif, wherein separation from God is likened to the loss of a mother. It will become common in Sufi parlance, and is utilized soon after Ibn Ṭufayl by Ibn al-ʿArabī.[137] This motif is discernible in *Ḥayy*, and, given the educative path I have argued Ibn Ṭufayl develops, such a motif is even explicit. This similarity is especially clear on the similarity between al-Ġazālī's description of the child's trust in the mother as the second kind of trust in God in his *Book on Divine Unity and Trust in Divine Providence*, which I highlighted in the previous chapter. This section shares much terminology with Ibn Ṭufayl's discussion of the end of the doe's life and her death, as both describe the relation between the boy (*ṣabīy*) and his mother (*ʾumma*) in terms of not being separated (*yafāriqu*) and claims that

136 Ibn al-Ḫaṭīb, *Rawaḍāt al-taʿrīf*, 282–283, my translation.

137 Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 24. Cf. further to the Ringstone of Aaron, in which the attribute of mercy is described as belonging to mothers, such that in respect of this attribute God is like a mother. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Ringstones of Wisdom*, 245.

the boy screams (*yaṣīḥu*) when his mother is gone.[138] This situation and terms describe both scenarios, with the addition that the child in al-Ġazālī's description is attached or hangs on to (*yataʿallaqu*) the hem of his mother's skirt, and Ḥayy, after he realizes his doe mother has departed her body, transfers his attachment (*ʿalāqa*) to that now-gone principle.[139] And this moment in Ḥayy's life, I have argued, marks the beginning of his search for God. If we follow Ḥayy's awareness of the concept of agency in its most straightforward form, we find that Ḥayy's initial awareness is that of the "master and mover," which he concludes is the reality of the doe mother that he has lost. It is only after her death that the agent becomes an object of desire and that Ḥayy begins the investigation that will uncover his true self and bring him the object he most deeply desires.

After examining the instances of desire within the narrative, we find that Ibn Ṭufayl presents a model of desire that shares the hallmarks of the inherent model of desire. Ibn Ṭufayl identifies the power capable of apprehending the truth, the heart or true self, with the power that desires the truth. Thus, he has recourse to what I have called the second conceptual maneuver deployed in an effort to identify the relationship between reason and desire. This response to the ambiguity in Aristotle's account, to a large extent portrayed in the Isḥāq *DA* translation, makes it possible to separate this power from reason. The desire from the power that constitutes Ḥayy's self is inherent to his self and connected to its object, God, in kind. This desire in itself is the actualization of the power of the self, which is desiring always to come into actuality. Indeed, this is what Ibn Ṭufayl said he would do, as he made clear in the prologue that there are two paths to the true, one that is the path of theoretical reason, and one that is the path of witnessing by taste. To some extent, Ibn Ṭufayl is effectively trying to combine two competing traditions, one logic based Aristotelian line and another Neoplatonic mystical line that are generally kept distinct. He does so by tearing Avicenna away from the Baghdad school and combining him with al-Ġazālī. It has also become clear that the reality of Ḥayy's object of desire, the Necessary Existent, is infinite and without comprehension ("it is something vast, infinite—encompassing, but unencompassed"), and thus it is permanent—even after death. Thus, Ḥayy's desire to witness the Agent will never be fully satisfied because he can never fully obtain the object of his desire. On these grounds, this inherent desire is also a permanent feature of the self.

138 al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 2514; Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 38.

139 al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 2514; Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 45.

Throughout this chapter, we found that desire for the true agent is also the organizing principle of Ḥayy's education, but that the scientific endeavors Ḥayy undertakes are nevertheless constitutive of Ḥayy's goal. Besides working to satisfy this desire, they instruct Ḥayy in the nature of his object, being instances of the perfection that stems from the cause and principle of perfection. His conclusions regarding the one and the many, and the ways in which these principles manifest in the natural world, were building blocks that genuinely reveal to him the unity of the Agent whose effects are diffused into the world. This educational structure is profoundly different from the curriculum followed by Ibn Bāǧǧa, for whom logic was at the center of philosophical and scientific exercise. Thus, with his *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān*, Ibn Ṭufayl offers an alternative both to Ibn Bāǧǧa's account of desire and to his vision of philosophy. While in Ibn Bāǧǧa's account desire ought ultimately to cease, not being part of the human essence, Ibn Ṭufayl places desire as the very actualization of the human essence, built into it as its unceasing drive. Further, according to Ibn Bāǧǧa's account of desire, the desiring or striving power is subordinated to a concept-supplying power or apprehension, be it sense, imagination, or reason. Thus, in itself the desire from this power was not solely connected to the truth in kind, but rather changed according to object, each specific instance of desire determined by its new object. These two Andalusī philosophers offer us a unique juxtaposition of an inherent model of human desire with a non-inherent model of human desire. By identifying the genuinely human desire against other desires, and accounting for the way in which this desire attains its object, they elucidate basic differences between the two models. Further, these texts nicely show that different connections of desire to the subject can ground different kinds of human experience, their disagreement over the Sufis being a case in point. Their use and appraisal of their philosophical predecessors further shows the depth of the disagreement about desire and its relation to the truth, revealing the importance of what we desire, how we might fulfill this desire, and what it can tell us about ourselves.

CONCLUSION

# Modelling the Study

At the start of this book, I highlighted that at least one contemporary scholar has noted ambiguity between the relation of reason and desiring in Aristotle's thought.[1] Specifically, it is not always clear which Aristotle took to occur first: the instance of desiring itself or the evaluation of an object of desire. I claimed in the Introduction that this distinction could be expanded to a more comprehensive one: desire that occurs inherently to the desiring subject versus desire that occurs as the result of some sort of combinatory, non-inherent process within the desiring subject. On the former account, desire occurs as the very activity of the subject that desires (e.g. various parts of the soul, psychological powers, underlying substance), is therefore connected to its objects in kind (generic or specific), and continues permanently insofar as the desiring subject is the sort of being it is. On the latter account, desire occurs as *an* activity with and among many activities within the desiring subject (e.g. the human person), is therefore not specific to its objects in kind, and, given the need of this desire to be presented with an object from outside, is contingent. I also claimed that later thinkers influenced by and part of the Aristotelian tradition responded to the ambiguity about desire, specifically within the human person, by utilizing these models to make two conceptual maneuvers that were drawn along more or less the same lines. The core issue in these cases is the need to maintain intellect or reason's inviolability side by side with the desire that was acknowledged to be necessary for human perfection. These thinkers either subordinated the desiderative power of the soul to the basic apprehending capacity that formed the more essential part of the human being, or identified the desiderative power with the apprehending power that was the essence of the human being. The first maneuver required the apprehending power to be evaluative or discriminative in some capacity, since that power needs to be able to evaluate the object in order to present it as valuable, and this evaluation is generally understood to be rational in some way. The second maneuver leaves open the possibility of bypassing this evaluative step, since the apprehending = desiring power is already connected to its objects in kind, which it desires as a basic aspect of what it is. The second maneuver does not rule out the role of evaluation, but rather allows for desire *without* evaluation. It is this allowance,

1 See above, p. 7 ff.

I argue, that concedes truth-centered non-rational desiring a place within the human being. But before drawing more general conclusions, let me remind us of how we got here.

The examination of Plotinus's notion of ἔφεσις in the first chapter offered an account of a thoroughgoing inherent desire for the Good. Occurring throughout Plotinus's system, this desire functions as the impulse toward being that accounted, from Intellect down to matter, for the unity in the world. While forms and formal principles are responsible for discrete instances of unity, which I identified as being good-like, desire worked as the matter that underlies the global unity of Intellect and Soul. After arguing that ἔφεσις manifests in many ways in the human person, I traced the process of becoming virtuous and the role of virtues as ensuring the highest degree of unity within the human person—body and soul. Virtue unifies the soul with Intellect as matter to form, the process of this identification being the process of becoming virtuous. Good, for Plotinus, equals unity, since the unity-giving function of the One is what makes it truly good and in turn what makes all things desire it. With this account now in hand, I returned to the structure of Intellect in order to examine the way in which Plotinus took Intellect to have a dual aspect: one intellectual insofar as it intellects the intelligibles, and the other non-intellectual insofar as it is capable of looking back toward the One. The identification of this act of looking with the activity of desiring the highest reality places Plotinus in the category of thinkers who ultimately identified the desiring power with the apprehending power, but in his case, this identification happened even on the metaphysical level.

The second chapter considered the surviving forms of the Arabic translation of Plotinus's materials, and highlighted that here, the adaptations reveal that both maneuvers were employed to account for desire's role and reason's sovereignty. On the one hand, desire was relegated to the substance of soul alone in the most influential *ThA*, where Intellect was granted no desire at all, such that desire in turn was subordinated to Intellect. The dismissal of desire from the realm of Intellect went hand in hand with the conflation of Intellect and God, and in turn soul's desire was explicitly and wholly rational, even in the sense that soul itself steps out of Intellect when it takes on a form of desire. In turn, becoming virtuous means turning the soul's attention to the world of Intellect. Thus, on the other hand, this process reveals that in the Arabic Plotinus materials as well, the soul's act of apprehending at the truth (in this case, the forms) is identified with a type of looking, ensuring an identification of the apprehending power of the soul with desire. In the last section of this chapter, I examined Avicenna's commentary on the *ThA*, arguing that Avicenna presented a bottom up interpretation of the text. He distinguishes universal desire

as the desire most proper to the rational soul, its aim being the development of the forms in the intellect. In general, Avicenna's commentary on the *ThA* continues what I argued was a progressive Aristotelianization of Plotinus's text, which was initially seen in the translation itself.

In the third chapter I turned to consider Aristotle's own account of desire as it was transmitted into Arabic in the *DA*, as well as the way al-Fārābī assimilates the account of *DA* into his thought. Examining three surviving Arabic presentations of the *DA*, I highlighted the differences between them in communicating the connection between the desiring power and the apprehending powers, showing that each translation offers a slightly different account. First, the anonymous translation seems to offer a straightforwardly non-inherent account of desire, while the translation that is attributed to Isḥāq and transmitted by Averroes offers a clearly inherent account. Thus, each of these translations—both of which were available in al-Andalus and quoted by Averroes—offers one maneuver cited above: the anonymous translation separates desire from reason and makes it something that follows upon the object presented by the apprehending power, while the translation of Isḥāq identifies reason and imagination *themselves* as the desiring powers. Al-Fārābī employs the first maneuver, and literally calls the striving soul the servant of those apprehending powers. Indeed, only in one of his two political works does he explicitly attribute desire to theoretical reason *at all*, emphasizing the discomfort of connecting theoretical reasoning and desire too closely. This hesitation, I argue, stems in part from the fact that desire is discussed in terms of locomotion and action, which thus might be thought to restrict desire to practical reason. I argue that nevertheless according to al-Fārābī, desire is central to Aristotle's thought, especially considering al-Fārābī's connection of desire to logical inquiry. In the end, al-Fārābī models human desire on a non-inherent model, according to which scientific investigation meets the desire to know and perfects the human person in the acquisition of intellect.

At the halfway mark of the book, I turned to al-Andalus, and considered the Fārābian thought of the first Muslim proponent of a complete Andalusī Aristotelian philosophy, Ibn Bāǧǧa. Although this thinker offers no one systematic investigation of the striving power, he discusses it throughout his corpus, and in this chapter, I gathered these discussions in an attempt to form a holistic picture of his understanding of desire. In conjunction with existing research, I argued that Ibn Bāǧǧa follows al-Fārābī in subordinating desire to reason, insofar as desire is basically connected to the human essence, but ultimately stands outside of it. Indeed, Ibn Bāǧǧa integrates the division of desire and reason so thoroughly that he employs the non-inherent model of human desire on levels throughout the human person, so the desire plus the concept that is being

desired occurs from the rational part of the soul all the way down to the innate heat and striving soul in the body. This rationalist approach carries over to the moral virtues, which, according to Ibn Bāğğa, are all subordinated to intellect, even at the expense of the body. In turn, Ibn Bāğğa understands human perfection to be constituted by the development and completion of the rational power of the soul, and to end in the realization of the acquired intellect.

In the penultimate chapter I turned to Ibn Ṭufayl, and introduced the text that forms the endpoint of this study. I argued that in order to appreciate the allegory, readers must take Ibn Ṭufayl at his word in the prologue regarding his influences, as they reveal his intention to employ what he would call an Aristotelian approach in his text. I examined further the aim Ibn Ṭufayl claims to have in his narrative, which is an exposition of Avicenna's eastern philosophy, which Ibn Ṭufayl identifies with the highest human goal as presented by Sufis and al-Ġazālī. In the last section of the chapter, I considered the commencement of the narrative, where we find two different origin stories for the title character, Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān, and argued that each story represents one of Ibn Ṭufayl's two masters, Avicenna or al-Ġazālī, both of whose thought is central to Ibn Ṭufayl's understanding of desire.

Having set up the text, I turned in the sixth and final chapter to examine desire in *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān*. I argued that desire occurs at every crucial turn in the title character's intellectual and spiritual journey, and that what appear to be discrete instances of desire indeed trace and develop the same desire for one object: the ultimate Agent. Ibn Ṭufayl deploys the thought of Avicenna and al-Ġazālī in his depiction of desire, unifying the desire Ḥayy experiences from the death of his doe mother to his realization of himself in the Necessary Existent. Arguing that Ḥayy's education is unified and directed by the notion of agency, I showed that the heart to which Ibn Ṭufayl refers in his depictions of desire is identical to the power to witness the Necessary Existent, which is Ḥayy's true self. Ibn Ṭufayl utilizes an inherent model of human desire, making this power to apprehend the truth identical to the desiring power for that truth, the move Ibn Ṭufayl uses to account for the possibility of seeking this object. Thus, he employs both maneuvers I mentioned above, separating reason from true human desire, but rather than subordinating desire to reason, he places the two more or less on a par with one another, and makes desire inherent to the essential power to apprehend the Necessary Existent. Although reasoning is integral to the process of truth-realization, Ibn Ṭufayl maintains its separation from the power he describes, thereby depicting the division between the path to the truth by way of reasoning and the path to the truth by way of witnessing that he explains and distinguishes in the prologue. By making these two paths compatible but recognizably distinct, Ibn Ṭufayl effectively aims to

reject and refute the standard intellectual dichotomy presented in philosophy of the Islamic world, with logic-centered, hardcore Aristotelians on one side, and mystically inclined Neoplatonists on the other, represented throughout his text in the thought of Avicenna and al-Ġazālī.

## 1 Drawing the Boundaries of the Book

Through this book, I have tried to show two things. First, I have made a philosophical point about two different types of desire at work in ancient and medieval philosophy, developed along two models. Second, I have traced these models through the thought of various figures in the Graeco-Arabic Aristotelian tradition up to two Andalusī philosophers, each of whom presented, I have argued, one of these models. Here at the end, I would like to make a few additional remarks by way of an overview of the project's genesis and fulfillment. I want to explain more fully the reason I set the boundaries of the study as I do, with Plotinus and Ibn Ṭufayl, whose inherent models of desire are the main ones I offer. This project began with a basic suspicion about a deep similarity between Plotinus and Ibn Ṭufayl, a similarity not about emanation or witnessing or the nature of God, but about desire. On the surface, it is not clear why that would be the case—the desire I examined in Plotinus's thought is metaphysical in nature, accessible psychologically, but nevertheless a far cry from Ibn Ṭufayl's account. In this latter account, the desire that most definitively marks the human being is from one specific power that may in fact never even by actualized in the first place. Nevertheless, there is something similar in the experience Plotinus and Ibn Ṭufayl both describe, and this similarity itself pointed to the nature of their goals. This resemblance led me to focus on the potentially non-rational nature of the desire at issue. Insofar as one wants a model of desire within the human being that allows for such a desire *while* keeping one's account philosophically rigorous and keeping that desire separate from the body, a standard Aristotelian account of desire will likely be insufficient. Understanding exactly on what grounds it will be insufficient requires examining that account more closely.

Thus, moving forwards, investigation of the Arabic translation of Plotinus showed that while Intellect did not desire, the soul itself was defined in terms of desiring, which was itself significant. Desire in this case exists along with soul as a basic and guaranteed aspect of it. This fact should be no surprise, since, on a Neoplatonic model, desire is important in accounting for the grounds on which procession and reversion happen. However, when one turns to examine the Aristotelian tradition in Arabic as we now know it—and the staunch

proponents thereof such as al-Fārābī and Ibn Bāǧǧa—one finds a different, yet generally consistent, interpretation of desire within the human being. The desiderative power generates desire not alone, but by coordinating with other powers—those that apprehend and those that judge. Thus, on any one of these three accounts, even in minimal cases, there is a complex psychological apparatus at work in instances of active desiring. This contrast proves enlightening, for it reminds us of a distinction within Plotinus's descriptions of progress toward the Good, as a result of which one can begin to see the difference in the two models. According to Plotinus, the desire for the Good is something discernable, but not definable, either in speech or in reality. The nature of the Good or the One precludes definition. Nevertheless, individuals work toward the One in an effort to satisfy this basic desire, a desire that occurs *alongside* rational desires, βουλήσεις, and the rational thought that defines them. At this point, the difference starts to become clear: some desire originates from rational reflection, making a value judgment, motivating action; but some desire seems unoriginated—it is just there. For Plotinus, this is quite literally the case, insofar as he accounts for the generation of everything other than the One by means of and out of the desiring that issues from it. The inherent desire precedes, on Plotinus's account, the defined subject that this desire will characterize. Thus, behind and within the various parts and powers of the soul lies this constant desiring for the Good that individuals are responsible for identifying and following. But the case of Ibn Ṭufayl is different, since he identifies this inherent desire as belonging to a power of the soul of the sort we see developed by Aristotle and then taken up explicitly by al-Fārābī and Ibn Bāǧǧa. Indeed, working our way from Plotinus through the explicitly Aristotelian accounts allowed us to discern what is happening in Ibn Ṭufayl's account with more specification. By examining Plotinus's account of inherent desire and then going through several iterations of non-inherent desire, Ibn Ṭufayl's power-based account of inherent desire both reminds us of the difference between inherent and non-inherent desire, and reveals the extent to which the terms of the two models have become entangled while the distinction remains intact. Thus, albeit in different ways, Plotinus and Ibn Ṭufayl both go to show the varied use philosophers made of Aristotle's investigations of desire, even while they presented what we would ultimately call un-Aristotelian accounts.

Given the line of Aristotelians that forms the center of the book, it is worth taking some time to reflect on the extent to which, regarding the topic of desire, we might say that Ibn Ṭufayl belongs to this group, especially since I have loosely referred to him as an Aristotelian throughout this study. After tracing the line of influence from the Arabic Aristotle to al-Fārābī to Ibn Bāǧǧa, the provenance of the power concept at the core of Ibn Ṭufayl's account is

firmly established. The connection of desire to apprehending powers, the use of potentiality and actuality to explain desire, and the basic connection of desire to human perfection all coincide with key aspects of the Aristotelian account of desire and power psychology. In the case of Ibn Bāǧǧa, we might identify his accounts as a summation of the development of Aristotle's psychology of desire: from Aristotle's account of desire within the context of animal locomotion, to al-Fārābī's incorporation of desire into a theory of human perfection, to the complete integration of desire into human intellection by Ibn Bāǧǧa himself. I called this a development, but expansion is perhaps a better designation. Indeed, it is by way of the application of the account of practical reason to one of theoretical reason and learning, as clearly laid out by Wirmer, that al-Fārābī and Ibn Bāǧǧa build upon the *DA* account and expand it to include the theoretical aspects of reason clearly.[2] To some extent, we are entitled to include Ibn Ṭufayl's own implementation of the power of desire as a continuation of this line of Aristotelian expansion. Nevertheless, due to the particular use Ibn Ṭufayl makes of these concepts, he steps away from this Aristotelian tradition even in this continuation. So, to answer our question from above, on the one hand, it is certainly clear that Ibn Ṭufayl avails himself of the tools afforded by Aristotelian psychology and the existent tradition built on that psychology. On the other hand, the basic difference between what we find in *Ḥayy* on the nature of ultimate truth and human perfection versus what we find in the other three Aristotelians is central, and it moves Ibn Ṭufayl away from the Aristotelian tradition that precedes him and places him in the competing "Aristotelian" tradition of Ibn Ṭufayl's own making, one that, in the prologue, he postures himself as completing.[3]

This basic difference brings me to the last remark regarding the philosophical contribution of the models of this study and the placement of Plotinus and Ibn Ṭufayl. A basic tension has run throughout this book, which is the fact that the model of inherent desire for which I have argued, and the two examples I offered in particular, allows that something one might consider non-rational be part of the aim and goal of philosophy itself. Some might object to this allowance, out of a worry that incorporating an apparently mystical goal undermines or illegitimates work that is otherwise indisputably philosophical. Part of the problem in these cases is a lack of options in situating these aspects of the world or the self within a philosophical framework. Indeed, it would in fact seem that potentially non-rational aspects do undermine the

2 See above, pp. 153–156.

3 See Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy*, 12–16, and above pp. 189–190.

familiar parts of philosophical inquiry if they cannot sit side by side with the rational ones, organized together within one account. This possibility is particularly problematic because the sort of non-rational aspect at issue usually threatens to pull the rug out from under rational aspects of human activity. To use another space metaphor, once we reach the top of the latter, we kick the latter away. In many cases, philosophers have managed to organize non-rational parts of the human experience within and mostly subordinated *under* rational ones: emotions, appetites, ignorance—we can generally account for these parts of ourselves in terms of the nature of the body. At the very least, the body is involved in these examples, either as a source, as a distraction, or both. However, when we consider a potentially non-rational *goal*—when what we want to grasp is non-bodily but still non-rational—we cannot have recourse to the body to explain in what way this part of human experience fits in with the rest, or in what way it can exist alongside rational activities at all. On this understanding, non-rational non-bodily parts of the human person are quite literally out of place. This incongruity is, I think, a large part of what is at issue in rejections of non-rational non-bodily aspects of or approaches to human experience as they occur in otherwise obviously philosophical thinkers.

One can say only so much in response to suspicions about "mystical" or non-rational (or supra-rational, etc.) elements of philosophical accounts. One cannot account for *why* these elements seem to be present to human beings (at least, as according to the philosophers in question) any more than one can account for *why* rational elements seem to be present to human beings. The answer is the same: they just are; we have this capacity, and most other beings do not. Ḥayy's awareness of the Necessary Existent, in the special supra-rational sense that Ibn Ṭufayl intends, is not something he can discern in other animals, just as we do not discern the same sort of rationality we have in other animals. Even if we have to take the existence of these aspects as hypothetical brute facts, we can nevertheless show the extent to which these sorts of non-rational elements fit into philosophical accounts of the human being. Demarcating desires is, in fact, a good way to accomplish this sort of reconciliation, since desire is a unique (and broad) phenomenon that, by itself, is neither rational nor non-rational, neither physical nor non-physical, neither good nor bad. But once it is at work—once you have *a* desire—on most accounts you have direction and an object. So, insofar as one can account for desire in a human being, one has a way to connect human beings to something beyond human reason. Of course, on this account one is still burdened with explaining exposure to the object, the relation of this desire to other desires, and so on. But the point is that desire, an indisputable aspect of the human being, is capable of grounding a connection to something non-bodily and yet non-rational.

Given the possibilities opened up by the model of inherent desire, I take this book to have offered a conciliatory solution for interpreting philosophers whose thought challenges our interpretive edifice. We have a problem as contemporary scholars, specifically when working on figures like Plotinus or Ibn Ṭufayl, in that these thinkers, while being undoubtedly philosophical, nevertheless include in their thought an aspect that we would call mystical, non-rational, supra-rational, etc. Whatever we choose to call it, it can, so it seems, belie interpretations of these thinkers as philosophers, insofar as we present ourselves with an exclusive dichotomy of philosophy or mysticism. In fact, for both thinkers, there are or have been interpretations that, to some extent, reduce philosophical exercise to an over-arching mystical endeavor, a reduction that would, it seems, throw the rational inquiry and proof into oblivion. Thus, there is an understandable inclination in contemporary scholarship to emphasize rational aspects of each of these thinkers. I take this move, on the one hand, to be a just attempt to make a case for the inclusion of such thinkers within the category of philosophy, and on the other, to stem from uncertainty about approaching ostensibly mystical aspects philosophically, since it is generally unclear in what way we should incorporate or classify these features. A basic thing I hope to have accomplished in this book is to have offered, and shown to be plausible, an account on which these sorts of elements can sit side by side with typically philosophical elements, and in fact, even work together with them. For both Plotinus and Ibn Ṭufayl, the basic desire for the First Cause does not negate human rational investigation or engagement with the world. In both instances, the authors point to traces or signs that draw one to the First Cause and ultimate object of desire, and these traces are genuinely constitutive of the philosophical endeavor that is and leads to one's goal.

## 2 Ibn Bāǧǧa and Ibn Ṭufayl: Modelling Good Desire

A basic fact upon which this study rests is that desire was noticeably important to both Ibn Bāǧǧa and Ibn Ṭufayl. As Wirmer showed in his discussion of Ibn Bāǧǧa and Ibn Ṭufayl on desire, they both stood in a tradition that emphasized human desire, and desire is, to some extent, central to their philosophical method. I think we can emphasize this fact further by acknowledging the extent to which these Andalusī authors took their work itself to model desire. I argued in the final chapter that Ibn Ṭufayl explicitly intends his work both to incite desire in the reader and to show the reader what educating that desiring subject looks like. Using al-Ġazālī's image, he claims, "I want only to bring you along the paths in which I have preceded you and make you swim in the sea

I have just crossed … I turn now to a small glimpse along the road of arousing desire and urging upon the beginning of the path."[4] But we find also that in Ibn Bāǧǧa's *Epistle on Farewell*, which he addresses to his disciple Ibn al-Imām, he emphasizes that he himself desires that his disciple join him in his intellection, writing, "In my soul is an intense desire for your partnership in the kind of concerns that are steadier and more necessary."[5] This shared commitment to desire seems, in part, to stem from their competing influences: al-Fārābī in the case of Ibn Bāǧǧa, and of course al-Ġazālī for Ibn Ṭufayl. But there is another point, which might explain Ibn Ṭufayl's own emphasis on desire as someone who came *after* Ibn Bāǧǧa. This is the extent to which Ibn Ṭufayl's understanding of the goal of philosophy differs from Ibn Bāǧǧa's, and the fact that this difference is reflected in their conceptions of desire. In Ibn Bāǧǧa's and even al-Fārābī's discussions of human desire, this desire relates immediately to a concept and is satiated through complete conceptualization. While human beings have a desire to know, it is possible for their desire to stop, this cessation happening by way of logically-fixed scientific inquiry. However, Ibn Ṭufayl's explanation of the desire of Ḥayy's true self is generally structured on al-Ġazālī's account of desire for God but articulated in terms of Aristotelian or Avicennan concepts. These two sorts of desire are radically different.

As I have argued throughout, the two different models of desire I have presented offer themselves easily to two divergent views of human activity and happiness. This disagreement, not surprisingly, centers around the role of logic and the objects that one apprehends when one realizes one's humanity fully. This difference in viewpoint regarding human activity and happiness also connects to social context, and thus to some extent reflects the climates in which they worked, given Ibn Bāǧǧa's logical proclivity (characteristic of science under the Almoravids) on the one hand, and Ibn Ṭufayl's Ġazālian predilection on the other (fundamental to Almohad religious policy). Discussion of desire in these two thinkers brings us back to the overall interconnectedness of desire, philosophy, and ethics that I have discussed throughout this study. Part of the reason for this connection is the importance of desire not just to the philosophical frameworks that philosophers build and work within, but to the actual process of philosophizing by which they accomplish these tasks. Philosophers are unique insofar as they are in the position not only to ask what role desire plays within accounts of psychology, motivation, and human perfection. They are in the position to ask what it is that human beings properly

4 Ibn Ṭufayl, 18–19.

5 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Risālat al-wadāʿ*, 89–90.

want, and in turn, to ask whether they are indeed doing what they take themselves to be doing, namely, following that same human desire they are in the process of delineating in the first place. Ibn Bāǧǧa and Ibn Ṭufayl saw clearly that as philosophers they must interrogate themselves as to whether they are indeed pursuing what they, as human beings, truly want, since they took human perfection to be the goal of philosophy. Desire thus plays a basic role in philosophical investigation, because on some level, desire works to motivate that investigation to begin with—something made clear in all of our thinkers. In the cases of inherent desire that I have examined, we saw various attempts at modelling this sort of desire—the object of which in both cases was limitless—into something intellectually more digestible. For example, in Plotinus the basic desire for the Good manifested on all levels of being, and judgments and actions—even some bad actions—themselves were ultimately driven by desire for the Good. The hypostases of Intellect and Soul were both supported by desire for the Good. To an extent, Plotinus's entire system is the reality of the desire for the Good working itself out in attempts to attain its object, each hypostasis a different model that works to draw one closer to the object of desire. In Ibn Ṭufayl's depiction of Ḥayy's various attempts to conceive of what it is he really desires, we also found a series of attempts to define his object of desire. Owing to the interconnected structure of the world, Ḥayy uses the natural world around him to model new attempts at the object he desires. Thus, he articulates spirit and soul as he sees them at work in the animals surrounding him long before he could isolate the purest conception, and then vision, of the Agent for whom he had been longing. Even in non-inherent desires, where, in the Aristotelian cases I examined above, the object of desire sits more clearly in view, one's desire is being reconfigured all the time, following upon adjustments in knowledge and then any ensuing value judgments. All of these examples connect to the larger point that, to some extent, desires are the kind of thing human beings are always modelling. I have aimed here and throughout to show just how important that is for the discipline of philosophy and for realizing who we most fundamentally are.

# Bibliography

## Primary Sources


Aristotle. *Analytica priora et posteriora*. Edited by William David Ross. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964.

Aristotle. *The Arabic Version of the* Nicomachean Ethics. Edited and translated by Anna Akasoy and Alexander Fidora. Leiden: Brill, 2005.

Aristotle. *Aristoteles' De Anima. Eine verlorene spätantike Paraphrase in arabischer und persischer Überlieferung*. Arabischer text nebst Kommentar, Quellengeschichtlichen Studien und Glossaren. Edited by Rüdiger Arnzen. Leiden: Brill, 1998.

Aristotle. *Aristotelis ethica Nicomachea*. Edited by Ingram Bywater. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894.

Aristotle. *Aristotelis physica*. Edited by William David Ross. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950.

Aristotle. *Aristotle's* Nicomachean Ethics. Translated, with an interpretive essay, notes, and glossary by Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins. The University of Chicago Press, 2011.

Aristotle. *The Complete Works of Aristotle. The Revised Oxford Translation*. Edited by Jonathan Barnes. 2 vols. Princeton University Press, 1995.

Aristotle. *De Anima*. Translated with an introduction and commentary by Christopher Shields. Oxford University Press, 2016.

Aristotle. *De Anima*. Edited by William David Ross. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961.

Aristotle. *Historia Animalium. Volume I Books I–X: Text*. Edited by D.M. Balme and prepared for publication by Allan Gotthelf. Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Aristotle. *Metaphysics Theta*. Translated, with a commentary, by Stephen Makin. Oxford University Press, 2006.

Aristotle. *Metaphysics. A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary*. Edited by William David Ross. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924.

Aristotle. *Posterior Analytics*. Translated and Commented, with an introduction, by Jonathan Barnes. Second edition. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

Averroes. *Averroes on Plato's* Republic. Translated by Ralph Lerner. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974.

Averroes. *Averrois Cordubensis Commentarium Magnum in Aristotelis de Anima Libros*. Edited by F. Stuart Crawford. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Medieval Academy of America, 1953.

Averroes. *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's* De Anima. Edited and translated by Alfred L. Ivry. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002.

Averroes. *Long Commentary on the* De Anima *of Aristotle*. Translated by Richard C. Taylor and Thérèse-Anne Druart. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.

Averroes. *Tafsīr mā baʿda l-ṭabīʿa*. 4 vols. Edited, with an introduction, by Maurice Bouyges, S.J. Beyrouth: Imprimerie Catholique, 1938–1952.

Avicenna. *Avicenna's Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle: A Critical Study with an Annotated Translation of the Text*. Translated by Ismail M. Dahiyat. Leiden: Brill, 1974.

Avicenna. *Avicenna's* De Anima. Edited by F. Rahman. Oxford University Press, 1959.

Avicenna. *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism. Remarks and Admonitions: Part Four*. Translated by Shams Inati. London: Kegan Paul International, 1996.

Avicenna. *al-Išārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*. Edited by Muǧtabā al-Zarʿī. Qom: Būstām-e Ketab, 2008.

Avicenna. *Metaphysics of the Healing*. Translated by Michael E. Marmura. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press: 2005.

Badawī, ʿAbd al-Rahman, ed. *Al-Aflātūniyya l-muḥdaṯha ʿinda l-ʿarab*. Second edition. Kuwait: Wakālat al-Maṭbūʿāt, 1977.

Badawī, ʿAbd al-Rahman, ed. *Aflutin ʿinda l-ʿarab. Plotinus apud Arabes. Theologia Aristotelis et fragmenta quae supersunt*. Cairo, 1955.

Badawī, ʿAbd al-Rahman, ed. *Arisṭu ʿinda l-ʿarab*. Second Edition. Kuwait: Wakālat al-Maṭbūʿāt, 1978.

Badawī, ʿAbd al-Rahman, ed. *Fī l-nafs, al-ārāʾ al-ṭabīʿīya al-mansūb ilā Flūṭarḫus, al-ḥiss wa-l-maḥsūs li-Ibn Rušd, al-nabāt al-mansūb ilā Arisṭūṭālīs*. Second Edition. Beirut, Lebanon: Wakālat al-Maṭbūʿāt, 1980.

al-Fārābī, Abū Naṣr. *Al-Fārābī's Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*. Translated, with an introduction by Muhsin Mahdi. New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962.

al-Fārābī, Abū Naṣr. *Al-Fārābī's Philosophy of Aristotle* (*Falsafat Arisṭūṭālīs*). Edited with and Introduction and Notes by Muhsin Mahdi. Beirut: Dār Majallat Shiʾr, 1961.

al-Fārābī, Abū Naṣr. *Fuṣūl muntaziʿa*. Edited by Fauzi M. Najjar. Beirut: Dār al-Mašriq, 1971.

al-Fārābī, Abū Naṣr. *Kitab al-Siyāsa al-Madaniyya, al-Mulaqqab bi-Mabādiʾ al-Mawjūdāt*. Edited by Fauzi M. Najjar. Beirut: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Kāṯulīkiyya, 1964.

al-Fārābī, Abū Naṣr. *Mabādiʾ ārāʾ ahl al-madīnat al-fāḍilah*. Revised and translated by Richard Walzer. Oxford, 1985.

al-Fārābī, Abū Naṣr. *Al-mantīq ʿinda al-Fārābī Kitāb al-Burhān wa-Kitāb Šarāʾīṭ al-yaqīn maʿa Taʿāllīq Ibni Bājja ʿalā al-Burhān*. Edited by Majid Fakhry. Beirut: Dār al-Mašriq, 1987.

al-Fārābī, Abū Naṣr. *On the Intellect*. In *Classical Arabic Philosophy: An Anthology of Sources*. Edited and translated by Jon McGinnis and David Reisman, 68–78.

al-Fārābī, Abū Naṣr. *Political Regime*. In *The Political Writings II: "Political Regime" and "Summary of Plato's Laws,"* translated and annotated, with an introduction, by Charles E. Butterworth, 27–94. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2015.

al-Fārābī, Abū Naṣr. *Risāla fī-l-ʿaql*. Edited by Maurice Bouyges. Beirut: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Kāṯulīkiyya, 1983.

al-Fārābī, Abū Naṣr. *Selected Aphorisms*. In *The Political Writings: "Selected Aphorisms" and Other Texts*, translated and annotated, with an introduction, by Charles E. Butterworth, 11–67. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001.

al-Ġazālī, Abu Ḥamid. *Faith in Divine Unity and Trust in Divine Providence*. Translated by David B. Burrell. Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2001.

al-Ġazālī, Abu Ḥamid. *Al-Ghazali on Love, Longing, Intimacy, and Contentment*. Translated by Eric Ormsby. Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2011.

al-Ġazālī, Abu Ḥamid. *Iḥyā' ʿulūm al-dīn*. 4 vols. Cairo: Lajnat Našr al-Ṯaqāfa al-Islāmiyya, 1356–1357 (1937–1938).

al-Ġazālī, Abu Ḥamid. *Jawāhir al-Quran*. Edited by Dr. Muhammad R.R. al-Qabani. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-ʿUlūm, 1990.

al-Ġazālī, Abu Ḥamid. *The Jewels of the Quran*. Translated by Muhammad Abul Quasem. Kuala Lumpur: 1977.

al-Ġazālī, Abu Ḥamid. *The Marvels of the Heart*. Translated by Walter James Skellie. Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2010.

al-Ġazālī, Abu Ḥamid. *The Niche of Lights*. Translated by David Buchmann. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1998.

Goldin, Owen, trans. *Philoponus(?) On Aristotle Posterior Analytics 2*. London: Duckworth, 2009.

Ibn al-ʿArabī, Muhyī l-Dīn. *The Ringstones of Wisdom*. Translated by Caner K. Dagli. Chicago: Great Books of the Islamic World, 2004.

Ibn al-Ḫaṭīb, Lisān al-Dīn. *Rawaḍāt al-taʿrīf bi-l-ḥubb al-šarif*. Edited by Muḥammad al-Kattānī. Casablanca: Dār al-Ṯaqāfa, 1970.

Ibn Bāǧǧa, Abū Bakr Muḥammad. *La conduite de l'isolé et deux autres épitres* (Epître de l'adieu; Conjonction de l'intellect). Introduction, édition critique du texte arabe, traduction et commentaire par Charles Genequand. Paris: Vrin, 2010.

Ibn Bāǧǧa, Abū Bakr Muḥammad. *Conjunction of the Intellect with Man*. In *Classical Arabic Philosophy: An Anthology of Sources*, translated and edited by Jon McGinnis and David Reisman, 269–283.

Ibn Bāǧǧa, Abū Bakr Muḥammad. *Fī l-ġāya l-ʾinsāniyya*. In *Über das Ziel des menschlichen Lebens*, edited and translated by Franz Schupp, 239–284.

Ibn Bāǧǧa, Abū Bakr Muḥammad. *Ittiṣāl al-ʿaql*. In *La conduite de l'isolé et deux autres épitres*, edited by Charles Genequand, 183–203.

Ibn Bāǧǧa, Abū Bakr Muḥammad. *Kitāb al-ḥayawān li-Abi Bakr Ibn Bāǧǧa ʿalā ḍauʾ maḥṭūṭai Uksfūrd wa-Barlīn*. Edited by Ǧawād al-ʿAmmāratī. Beirut and Casablanca: al-Markaz al-Ṯaqāfī al-ʿArabī, 2002.

Ibn Bāǧǧa, Abū Bakr Muḥammad. *Avempace. Libro de la Generación y Corrupción*. Edición, traducción y estudio Josép Puig Montada. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1995.

Ibn Bāǧǧa, Abū Bakr Muḥammad. *Libro sobre el alma*. Edited and translated by Joaquín Lomba. Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 2007.

Ibn Bāǧǧa, Abū Bakr Muḥammad. *Risālat al-wadāʿ*. In *La conduite de l'isolé et deux autres épitres*, edited by Charles Genequand, 89–120.

Ibn Bāǧǧa, Abū Bakr Muḥammad. *Tadbīr al-mutawaḥḥid*. In *La conduite de l'isolé et deux autres épitres*, edited by Charles Genequand, 121–182.

Ibn Bāǧǧa, Abū Bakr Muḥammad. *Über das Ziel des menschlichen Lebens*. Edited and translated by Franz Schupp. Hamburg: Meiner, 2015.

Ibn Bāǧǧa, Abū Bakr Muḥammad. *Rasā'il falsafiyya li-Abi Bakr Ibn Bāǧǧa, Abū Bakr Muḥammad*. Edited by Jamāl al-Dīn al-ʿAlawī. Beirūt and Casablanca: Dār al-Ṭaqāfa—Dār al-Našr al-Maghribiyya, 1983.

Ibn Bāǧǧa, Abū Bakr Muḥammad. *Ibn Bāǧǧah's ʿIlm al-Nafs*. Pakistan Historical Society Publication No. 26. Translated by Muḥammad Ṣaghīr Ḥasan al-Maʿṣūmī. Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1960.

Ibn Bāǧǧa, Abū Bakr Muḥammad. *Kitāb al-Nafs li-Ibn Bājja al-Andalusī*. Edited by Muḥammad Ṣaghīr Ḥasan al-Maʿṣūmī. Damascus: Majallat Majmaʿ al-ʿIlmī al-ʿArabī, 1960.

Ibn Bāǧǧa, Abū Bakr Muḥammad. *Taʿāllīq Ibni Bājja ʿalā al-Burhān*. In *Al-mantīq ʿinda al-Fārābī Kitāb al-Burhān*.

Ibn Bāǧǧa, Abū Bakr Muḥammad. Wetzstein I 87 (Ahlwardt 5060). Berlin, Preußische Staatsbibliothek. Now: Ms. Berol. Wetzstein I 87. Krakow, Biblioteka Jagiellońska.

Ibn Ṭufayl, Abū Bakr Muḥammad. *Hayy ben Yaqdhân, roman philosophique d'Ibn Thofail*. Texte arabe avec les variantes des manuscrits et de plusieurs éditions et traduction française. 2e edition. Translated and edited by Léon Gauthier. Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1936.

Ibn Ṭufayl, Abū Bakr Muḥammad. *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān*. Translated by Lenn Goodman. University of Chicago Press, 2009.

Plotinus, *The Enneads*. Edited by Lloyd P. Gerson. Translated by George Boys-Stones, John M. Dillon, Lloyd P. Gerson, R.A.H. King, Andrew Smith, and James Wilberding. Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Plotinus. *Ennead IV.3–4.29: Problems Concerning the Soul*. Translation and commentary by John Dillon and H.J. Blumenthal. Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2015.

Plotinus. *Plotini Opera. Editio maior* in 3 vols. including English translation of *Plotiniana Arabica* or *The Theology of Aristotle*. Museum Lessianum. Leiden: Brill, 1951–1973.

al-Šahrastānī, Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm. *Al-Milal wa-l-Niḥal*. Part two. Edited by William Cureton. London: The Society for the Publication of Oriental Texts, 1846.

Theophrastus. *Theophrastus* On First Principles (*known as his* Metaphysics). Philosophia Antiqua 119. Translated and edited by Dimitri Gutas. Leiden: Brill, 2010.

Wakelnig, Elvira, ed. and trans. *A Philosophy Reader from the Circle of Miskawayh*. Cambridge University Press, 2014.

## Secondary Sources

Adamson, Peter. *The Arabic Plotinus: A Philosophical Study of the Theology of Aristotle*. Gorgias Islamic Studies 10. Piscataway, New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2017.

Adamson, Peter. "The Arabic Plotinus: A Study of the 'Theology of Aristotle' and Related Texts." PhD Dissertation. University of Notre Dame (2000).

Adamson, Peter. "Aristotelianism and the Soul in the Arabic Plotinus." *The Journal of the History of Ideas* 62 (2001): 211–232.

Adamson, Peter. "Correcting Plotinus: Soul's Relationship to Body in Avicenna's Commentary on the *Theology of Aristotle*." *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies. Supplement* 83 (2004): 59–75.

Adamson, Peter. "The Ethical Treatment of Animals." In *The Routledge Companion to Islamic Philosophy*, edited by Richard C. Taylor and Luis Xavier López-Farjeat, 3761–3782. New York: Routledge, 2016.

Adamson, Peter. "A False Start? The Two Beginnings of Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān*." Forthcoming.

Adamson, Peter. "Non-Discursive Thought in Avicenna's Commentary on the *Theology of Aristotle*." In *Interpreting Avicenna: Science and Philosophy in Medieval Islam: Proceedings of the Second Conference of the Avicenna Study Group*, edited by Jon McGinnis, 87–111. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

Adamson, Peter. "Two Early Arabic Doxographies." *Modern Schoolman* 77, 2 (2000): 105–125.

Agamben, Giorgio. *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*. Edited and translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford University Press: 1999.

Akhtar, Ali Humayun. *Philosophers, Sufis, and Caliphs: Politics and Authority from Cordoba to Cairo and Baghdad*. Cambridge University Press, 2017.

al-ʿAlawī, Jamāl al-Dīn. *Muʾallafāt Ibni Bājja*. Beirut and Casablanca: Dār al-Ṭaqāfa—Dār al-Našr al-Maghribiyya, 1983.

Alon, Ilai. "Fārābī's Funny Flora: al-Nawābit as 'Opposition'." *Arabica* XXXVII (1990): 56–90.

Altmann, Alexander. "Ibn Bājja on Man's Ultimate Felicity." In *Studies in Religious Philosophy and Mysticism*, 73–107. New York: Routledge, 1969.

Arnou, René. *Le désir de Dieu dans la philosophie de Plotin*. 2e édition revue et corrigée. Rome: Presses de l'Université Grégorienne, 1967.

Bashier, Salman H. *The Story of Islamic Philosophy: Ibn Tufayl, Ibn al-ʾArabi, and Others on the Limit Between Naturalism and Traditionalism*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2011.

Belo, Catarina C. *Chance and Determinism in Avicenna and Averroes*. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

Bertolacci, Amos. "On the Arabic Translations of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*." *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 15 (2005): 241–275.

Black, Deborah L. *Logic and Aristotle's* Rhetoric *and* Poetics *in Medieval Arabic Philosophy*. Leiden: Brill, 1990.

Blumenthal, H.J. *Plotinus's Psychology: His Doctrines of the Embodied Soul*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971.

Bürgel, J. Christoph. "'Symbols and Hints:' Some Considerations concerning the meaning of Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān*" In *The World of Ibn Ṭufayl*, edited by Lawrence I. Conrad, 114–132.

Bussanich, John. "Mystical Elements in the Thought of Plotinus." *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: II* 36, 7, edited by Wolfgang Haase, 5300–5330. Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1994.

Bussanich, John. *The One and its Relation to Intellect in Plotinus: A Commentary on Selected Texts*. Leiden: Brill, 1988.

Bussanich, John. "Plotinus on the Being of the One." In *Metaphysical Patterns in Platonism: Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance and Modern Times*, edited by John F. Finamore and Robert M. Berchman, 57–73. The Prometheus Trust in association with the International Society for Neoplatonic Studies, 2005.

Bussanich, John. "Plotinus on the Inner Life of the One." *Ancient Philosophy* 7 (1987): 163–189.

Calouri, Damian. *Plotinus on the Soul*. Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Casewit, Yousef. *The Mystics of Al-Andalus: Ibn Barrajān and Islamic Thought in the Twelfth Century*. Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Chiaradonna, Riccardo. "Plotinus' Account of the Cognitive Powers of the Soul." *Topoi* 31 (2012): 191–207.

Chittick, Walter. *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-ʿArabi's Metaphysics of Imagination*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989.

Conrad, Lawrence I. "An Andalusian Physician at the Court of the Muwaḥḥids: Some Notes on the Public Career of Ibn Ṭufayl." *Al-Qanṭara* 16.1 (1995): 1–13.

Conrad, Lawrence I. Editor. *The World of Ibn Ṭufayl: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on* Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān. Leiden: Brill, 1996.

Corcilius, Klaus. "Aristotle's Definition of Non-Rational Pleasure and Pain and Desire." In *Aristotle's* Nicomachean Ethics*: A Critical Guide*, edited by Jon Miller, 117–143. Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Corrigan, Kevin. "Sources and Structures of Power and Activity in Plotinus." In *Divine Powers in Late Antiquity*, edited by Anna Marmodoro and Irini-Fotini Viltanioti, 17–38. Oxford University Press, 2017.

D'Ancona Costa, Cristina. "The Arabic Version of *Enn.* IV 7[2] and its Greek Model." In *Arabic Theology, Arabic Philosophy: From the Many to the One*, edited by James E. Montgomery, 127–156. Leuven: Peeters, 2006.

D'Ancona Costa, Cristina. *La discesa dell'anima nei corpi: ENN. 4. 8(6); Plotiniana arabica: pseudo-teologia di Aristotele, cap. 1 E 7; "Detti del sapiente greco."* Padova: Il Poligrafo, 2003.

D'Ancona, Cristina. "Greek into Arabic: Neoplatonism in translation." In *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, edited by Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor, 10–31. Cambridge University Press: 2005.

D'Ancona Costa, Cristina. "Porphyry, Universal Soul, and the Arabic Plotinus." *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 9, 1 (1999): 47–88.

De Blassi, Fernando Marti. "Considerations on the Concept of Audacity (tólma) in Plotinus." *International Philosophical Quarterly* 57, 1 (2017): 19–30.

De Callataÿ, Godefroid. "Did the Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa' Inspire *Ibn Tufayl* for his Yaqdhan?" *Ishraq* 4 (2013): 82–89.

De Callataÿ, Godefroid. "The Two Islands Allegory in the Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā': a walk through philosophical metaphors and literary motifs." *Ishraq* 4 (2013): 71–81.

Di Giovanni, Matteo. "Motifs of Andalusian Philosophy in the Pre-Almohad Age." *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* XXII (2011): 209–234.

Eliasson, Erik. *The Notion of That Which Depends Upon Us in Plotinus and its Background*. Leiden: Brill, 2008.

Emilsson, Eyjólfur K. *Plotinus*. New York: Routledge, 2017.

Emilsson, Eyjólfur K. "Plotinus on the Emotions." In *The Emotions in Hellenistic Philosophy*, edited by Juha Sihvola and Troels Engberg-Pedersen, 349–363. Dordrecht, NL: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998.

Emilsson, Eyjólfur K. *Plotinus on Intellect*. Oxford University Press, 2007.

Fackenheim, Emil L. "A Treatise on Love by Avicenna." *Medieval Studies* 7, 1 (1945): 208–228.

Fierro, Maribel. "The Religious Policy of the Almohads." In *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, edited by Sabine Schmidtke, 679–692. Oxford University Press, 2016.

Forcada, Miquel. "Ibn Bājja and the Classification of the Sciences in al-Andalus." *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 16 (2006): 287–307.

Forcada, Miquel. "Ibn Bājja on Medicine and Medical Experience." *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 21 (2011): 111–148.

Forcada, Miquel. "Ibn Bājja on *Taṣawwur* and *Taṣdīq*: Science and Psychology." *Arabic Sciences and Psychology* 24 (2014): 103–126.

Galston, Miriam. *Politics and Excellence: The Political Philosophy of Alfarabi*. Princeton University Press, 1990.

Genequand, Charles. *Alexander of Aphrodisias on the Cosmos*. Islamic Philosophy, Theology, and Science. Texts and Studies 44. Leiden: Brill, 2001.

Genequand, Charles. "Platonism and Hermetism in Al-Kindi's *Fī-l-Nafs*." *Zeitschrift für Geschichte des Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften*, 4 (1987–1988): 1–18.

Germann, Nadja. "Philosophizing Without Philosophy? On the Concept of Philosophy in Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān*." *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales* 75, 2 (2008): 271–301.

Gerson, Lloyd. *From Plato to Platonism*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2013.

Gerson, Lloyd. *Plotinus*. 2nd edition. New York: Routledge, 1998.

Griffel, Frank. *al-Ġazālī's Philosophical Theology*. Oxford University Press, 2009.

Gutas, Dimitri. *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition: Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works*. Second edition. Leiden: Brill, 2014.

Gutas, Dimitri. "Ibn Ṭufayl on Ibn Sīnā's Eastern Philosophy." *Oriens* 34 (1994): 222–241.

Gutas, Dimitri. "Intellect Without Limits: The Absence of Mysticism in Avicenna." In *Intellect et imagination dans la philosophie médiévale*, edited by M. Cândida-Pacheco and J. Francisco-Meirinhos, 351–372. Turnhout: Brepols, 2006.

Hadot, Pierre. *Plotinus, or the Simplicity of Vision*. Translated by Michael Chase. University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Hansberger, Rotraud. "Plotinus Arabus Rides Again." *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 21 (2011): 57–84.

Harvey, Steven, and Frédérique Woerther. "Averroes' *Middle Commentary* on Book I of the *Nicomachean Ethics*." *Oriens* 42 (2014): 254–287.

Harvey, Steven. "The Place of the Philosopher in the City according to Ibn Bājja." In *The Political Aspects of Islamic Philosophy. Essays in Honor of Muhsin S. Mahdi*, edited by Charles E. Butterworth, 199–233. Harvard University Press, 1992.

Hawi, Sami S. "Ibn Tufayl's Appraisal of His Predecessors and Their Influence on His Thought." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 7, 1 (1976): 89–121.

Hawi, Sami S. *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism: A Philosophic Study of Ibn Ṭufayl's* Ḥayy Bin Yaqẓān, Leiden: Brill, 1974.

Hayes, Josh. "The Arabic Reception of the *Nicomachean Ethics*," in *Aristotle and the Arabic Tradition*, edited by Ahmed Alwishah and Josh Hayes, 200–213. Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Hayes, Josh Michael. "Being Ensouled: Desire as an Efficient Cause in Aristotle's *De Anima*." *Epoché* 17, 2 (2013): 313–335.

Henry, Devin. "Aristotle on Animals." In *Animals: A History*, edited by Peter Adamson and G. Fay Edwards, 9–26. Oxford University Press, 2018.

Hourani, George F. "The Principal Subject of Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān*." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 15, 1 (1956): 40–46.

Ivry, Alfred L. "The Arabic Text of Aristotle's *De Anima* and its Translator." *Oriens* 36 (2001): 59–77.

Janos, Damien. "Moving the Orbs: Astronomy, Physics, and Metaphysics, and the Problem of Celestial Motion according to Ibn Sīnā." *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 21 (2011): 164–214.

Kalligas, Paul. "Plotinus Against the Gnostics." *Hermathena* 169 (2000): 115–128.

Kruk, Remke. "A Frothy Bubble: Spontaneous Generation in the Medieval Islamic Tradition." *Journal of Semitic Studies*, XXXV, 2 (1990): 265–282.

Kruk, Remke. "Ibn Bajja's Commentary on Aristotle's De animalibus." In *The Ancient*

*Tradition in Christian and Islamic Hellenism*, edited by Remke Kruk and Gerhard Endress, 165–180. Leiden: CNWS, 1997.

Kruk, Remke. "Ibn Ṭufayl: A Medieval Scholar's Views on Nature." In *The World of Ibn Ṭufayl*, edited by Lawrence I. Conrad, 69–89.

Kukkonen, Taneli. "Faculties in Arabic Philosophy." In *The Faculties*, edited by Dominik Perler, 66–96. Oxford University Press, 2015.

Kukkonen, Taneli. "Heart, Spirit, Form, Substance: Ibn Ṭufayl's Psychology." In *In the Age of Averroes: Arabic Philosophy in the Sixth/Twelfth Century*, edited by Peter Adamson, 195–214. Warburg Institute Colloquia 16, 2011.

Kukkonen, Taneli. *Ibn Tufayl: Living the Life of Reason*. London: Oneworld Publications, 2014.

Kukkonen, Taneli. "Ibn Ṭufayl and the Wisdom of the East." In *Late Antique Epistemology*, edited by Panayiota Vassilopoulou and Stephen Clark, 87–102. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2009.

Kukkonen, Taneli. "No Man Is an Island: Nature and Neo-Platonic Ethics in Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 46, 2 (2008): 187–204.

Lloyd, Geoffrey. "Aristotle on the natural sociability, skills and intelligence of animals." In Politeia *in Greek and Roman Philosophy*, edited by Verity Harte and Melissa Lane, 277–293. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Lomba, Joaquin. "Tratado de Avempace sobre la unión del intelecto con el hombre." *Anaquel de estudios árabes* 11 (2000): 369–391.

Lorenz, Hendrik. *The Brute Within: Appetitive Desire in Plato and Aristotle*. Oxford University Press, 2006.

Lyons, M.C. "An Arabic Translation of the Commentary of Themistius." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 17, 3 (1955): 426–435.

Maggi, Claudia. "The Plotinian Rethinking of Dyad and Numbers in *Ennead* VI 6." *Chôra. Revue d'études anciennes et médiévales* 11 (2013): 79–89.

Malti-Douglas, Fedwa. *"Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān* as Male Utopia." In *The World of Ibn Ṭufayl*, edited by Lawrence I. Conrad, 52–68.

al-Maʿṣūmī, Muḥammad Ṣaġīr Ḥasan. "Ibn Bājjah on the Human Intellect." *Islamic Studies* 4, 2 (1965): 121–136.

McGinnis, Jon and David Reisman, eds and trans. *Classical Arabic Philosophy: An Anthology of Sources*. Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2007.

McGroarty, Kieran. *Plotinus on Eudaimonia: A Commentary on Ennead I.4*, Oxford University, 2006.

Moss, Jessica. *Aristotle on the Apparent Good: Perception*, Phantasia*, Thought, & Desire*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

Musallam, Basim. "AVICENNA X. Medicine and Biology," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, III/1, 1987, 94–99.

Narbonne, Jean-Marc. *Plotinus in Dialogue with the Gnostics*. Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition 11. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

Nikulin, Dmitri. "Intelligible Matter in Plotinus." *Dionysius* 14 (1998): 85–114.

Nikulin, Dmitri. "Memory and Recollection in Plotinus." *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 96, 2 (2014): 183–201.

Noble, Christopher I. "How Plotinus's Soul Animates His Body: The Argument for the Soul-Trace at *Enn*. IV.4.18.1–9." *Phronesis* 58.3 (2013): 249–279.

Noble, Christopher I. "Plotinus' Unaffectable Soul." *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 52 (2016): 231–281.

Palacios, Asín. "Tratado de Avempace sobre la unión del intelecto con el hombre." *Al-Andalus* 7 (1942): 1–48.

Park, Katherine. *Secrets of Women: Gender, Generation, and the Origins of Dissection*. Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2006.

Pearson, Giles. *Aristotle on Desire*. Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Pessin, Sarah. *Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Phillips, John. *Order from Disorder: Proclus' Doctrine of Evil and its Roots in Ancient Platonism*. Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition 5. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

Phillips, John. "Plotinus and the 'Eye' of Intellect." *Dionysius* 14, 2 (1990): 79–103.

Phillips, John. "Plotinus on the Generation of Matter." *The International Journal of the Platonic Tradition* 3 (2009): 103–137.

Pocock, Edward, Jr. *Philosophus autodidactus sive epistola Abi Jaafar Ebn Tophail de Hai Ebn Yokdhan, in qua ostenditur quomodo ex inferiorum contemplatione ad superiorum notitiam ratio humana ascendere possit, ex arabica in linguam latinam versa ab Eduardo Pocockio A.M.* Oxford, 1671.

Puig Montada, Josép. Ibn Bâjja [Avempace]. In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2018 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta. URL: https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2018/entries/ibn-bajja/. Last Access: Oct. 30, 2020.

Puig Montada, Josép. "Philosophy in Andalusia: Ibn Bājja and Ibn Ṭufayl." In *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, edited by Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor, 155–179. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Radtke, Bernd. "How Can Man Reach the Mystical Union? Ibn Ṭufayl and the Divine Spark." In *The World of Ibn Ṭufayl*, edited by Lawrence I. Conrad, 165–194.

Remes, Pauliina. "Human Action and Divine Power in Plotinus." In *Divine Powers in Late Antiquity*, edited by Anna Marmodoro and Irini-Fotini Viltanioti, 38–60. Oxford University Press, 2017.

Richter-Bernburg, Lutz. "Medicina ancillae philosophiae: Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān*." In *The World of Ibn Ṭufayl*, edited by Lawrence I. Conrad, 90–113.

Rist, John M. "The Indefinite Dyad and Intelligible Matter in Plotinus." *The Classical Quarterly* 12, 1 (1962): 99–107.

Rosenthal, Franz. "Aš-Šayḫ al-Yūnānī and the Arabic Plotinus Source." *Orientalia* 21 (1952): 461–492.

Rosenthal, Franz. "Aš-Šayḫ al-Yūnānī and the Arabic Plotinus Source (Continued)." *Orientalia* 22, 4 (1953): 370–400.

Rosenthal, Franz. "Aš-Šayḫ al-Yūnānī and the Arabic Plotinus Source (Concluded)." *Orientalia* 24, 1 (1955): 42–66.

Savage-Smith, Emilie. "Attitudes Toward Dissection in Medieval Islam." *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 50, 1 (1995): 67–110.

Schroeder, Frederic Maxwell. *Form and Transformation: A Study in the Philosophy of Plotinus*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992.

Serrano Fuano, Delphina. "Why Did the Scholars of al-Andalus Distrust al-Ghazāli? Ibn Rushd al-Jadd's *Fatwā* on *Awliyāʾ Allāh*." *Der Islam* 83: 137–156.

Shihadeh, Ayman. *Doubts on Avicenna: A Study and Edition of Sharaf al-Dīn al-Masʿūdī's Commentary on the* Ishārāt. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

Stroumsa, Sarah. *Andalus and Sefarad: On Philosophy and its History in Islamic Spain*. Princeton University Press, 2019.

Stroumsa, Sarah, and Sara Sviri, "The beginnings of mystical philosophy in al-Andalus: Ibn Masarra and his *Epistle on Contemplation*," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 36 (2009): 201–253.

Ullmann, Manfred. *Die Nikomachische Ethik des Aristoteles in arabischer Übersetzung: Teil 1 Wortschatz*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011

Vasilakis, Dimitrios. "Love and myth in Plotinus' Enneads III.5." *Diotima. Review of Philosophical Research* 43 (2015): 68–75.

Wiitala, Michael Oliver. "Desire and the Good in Plotinus." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 21, 4 (2013): 649–666.

Wirmer, David. "Arabic Philosophy and the Art of Reading." In *Studying Arabic Philosophy*: *Meaning, Limits and Challenges of a Modern Discipline*, edited by Jean-Baptiste Brenet and Olga L. Lizzini, 179–244. Sorbonne: Vrin, 2019.

Wirmer, David. "Das natürliche Begehren des einsamen Philosophen. Bildung durch Wissenschaft bei Ibn Bāǧǧa und Ibn Ṭufail." In *Albertus Magnus und der Ursprung der Universitätsidee*, edited by Ludger Honnefelder, 206–240. Berlin University Press, 2011.

Wirmer, David. *Vom Denken der Natur zur Natur des Denkens: Ibn Bāǧǧas Theorie der Potenz als Grundlegung der Psychologie*. Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2014.

Woerther, Frédérique. "Averroes' Goals in the *Paraphrase* (*Middle Commentary*) of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*." In *Interpreting Averroes: Critical Essays*, edited by Peter Adamson and Matteo Di Giovanni, 218–236. Cambridge University Press, 2019.

Zimmermann, F.W. "The Origins of the so-called *Theology of Aristotle*." In *Warburg Institute Surveys and texts XI: Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages*, edited by Jill Kraye, Charles B. Schmitt, and W.F. Ryan, 110–240. London: Warburg Institute, 1986.

# Index


Absāl 205, 215, 223
action 41–44, 54, 73–74, 110–112, 116, 125–128, 131, 134–135, 137–138, 150, 152, 155, 162, 166, 174, 176–178, 204, 206–209, 214, 220, 222, 231
activity 2–4, 11–14, 27–29, 37–38, 44, 50–53, 57–59, 63–67, 72–78, 85, 90–91, 95, 114, 137–138, 145, 148–150, 160–161, 172–173, 245–246
  human 7, 10, 17–19, 127, 132, 134–135, 140–142, 156–157, 161, 173–182, 212–215, 252, 254
Adamson, Peter 97, 107, 198–200
agent 203, 206–207, 209–210, 214–215, 218, 222–223, 228–244
Akhtar, Ali Humayun 192
Alexander of Aphrodisias 9, 23n17, 145
Almohads 144, 183, 204, 234, 254
Almoravids 144–145, 160, 183, 188, 254
Altmann, Alexander 171–172
Andalus, al- 68, 112, 115, 121, 144, 183, 185, 190, 192, 202
animals 5–7, 23, 28–29, 101–102, 104, 113, 115, 117, 120–121, 123, 126, 134, 148, 161–162, 164–166, 169, 171, 174–176, 178, 181–182, 200–201, 204, 206–208, 223–230, 233, 252, 255
apprehension (*idrāk*) 105–108, 114–115, 117, 121, 126, 131, 138, 153, 170, 189, 194, 210, 215–219, 222–223, 239
  *see also* power, apprehending
Arnou, René 22
assimilation 54–55, 57, 58, 87–94, 104–106
  *see also* imitation
attachment (*ʿ-l-q*) 78, 200, 203, 205–209, 211, 238, 241, 243
Averroes 112, 115–117, 119–122, 130, 145, 149, 183, 191n34, 210, 215, 226n80, 247
Avicenna 99–109, 145–146, 169, 182, 183, 186–188, 190, 192–196, 199–203, 213–222, 227, 235, 239, 241, 243, 246–249, 254

Bashier, Salman 196–198
beauty 25, 38, 59–60, 78, 101, 107, 130, 212–213, 221–222, 238
Bertolacci, Amos 135
body 43–44, 79, 82–92, 94, 127, 158, 161–168, 172–179, 181, 190, 206–210, 216, 218, 222–230
  *see also* heavenly bodies

Casewit, Yousef 192
cause 9, 26–27, 29, 40, 42, 47, 69, 71–73, 77–78, 80, 81, 92, 95, 117–119, 132, 136, 154–155, 209, 219, 230, 232–234, 242, 244
  First 18, 46–47, 70–72, 79, 80, 87, 92, 98, 102–104, 128–131, 135–137, 141–143, 206, 221, 233–234, 236–237, 253
choice 10, 126, 128, 130, 133–135, 137, 176
concept 146, 154, 156–159, 161, 163–166, 169, 171–173, 178, 181–182, 218
consideration (*ta'ammul*) 128, 133
contemplation 28–29, 41–42, 94, 112, 117, 137, 150, 171, 175, 191n32
Cornell, Vincent 193

D'Ancona, Cristina 75–76, 90
deliberation 94, 112, 117
demonstration 153–161, 171, 173
desire
  *ʿišq* 71, 76, 102–104, 129–130, 157, 221
  appetite 82–87, 92, 103–104, 116–117, 130, 133, 137, 148, 158, 216, 223–229
  βούλησις 22–26, 48, 48fn85, 112, 116
  by nature 69, 134–135, 138–143, 153–161, 181–182
  desiderium 116, 117
  ἐπιθυμία 22–24, 37, 82, 113, 116
  ἔφεσις 21–25, 26–33, 35–29, 40–45, 48, 50, 52–53, 82, 111–112, 137
  ἔρως 25, 36–37, 47–48, 59
  for the Good 20–21, 26–29, 36–44, 45–47, 50, 53–54, 66–67, 80, 135, 137, 139, 141
  form of 75, 77–78, 100
  formless 57–67, 86–87
  θυμός 56, 113
  *ḥubb* 76, 103, 129, 218–219
  *ḥirṣ* 82, 84
  human 125, 131–135, 137–139, 141–142, 145, 147, 151–161, 173, 181–182, 212, 216, 222, 234, 244, 247–248, 253–255

inherent 44–45, 81–83, 98, 119, 121, 142, 210, 212–213, 243, 248, 250, 255
innate 39–40, 100, 138
*irāda* 71, 79, 103, 112, 125, 134, 160, 217
irascible 217
non-inherent 145, 250, 255
*nuzūʿ* 103–104, 125–128, 138, 147–149, 181
ὄρεξις 22–24, 38–40, 75, 82, 113, 116, 119, 122–124, 135, 137
particular 75, 78, 99, 101–102
πόθος 22, 24fn23, 39, 59
*rawm* 82–83
*šahwa* 82, 84–86, 91, 103, 111, 115–116, 120, 130, 133, 137, 158, 223–229
*šawq* 71–75, 78, 80, 82, 100–102, 111, 115–116, 118–119, 125, 130, 132–133, 137–138, 147–150, 152–153, 156–158, 180–181, 203–206, 208–212, 214–219, 221–223, 224, 230, 241
theoretical 153–161
to know 40–43
universal 75, 78, 86, 99, 101–102
*see also* love
dissection 224–229
doe 184, 197, 201, 203–204, 206–209, 218, 222–230, 233, 237, 241–243, 248

eastern philosophy 185–186, 190, 202
Emilsson, Eyjólfur K. 34–35, 47, 67

Fārābī, Abū Naṣr al- 2, 15–19, 103, 109–112, 116–117, 122, 125–143, 145–149, 153, 155–156, 158–160, 166–167, 173, 176, 181–182, 189–190, 195, 204, 215–216, 219, 226, 247, 250–251, 254
Fāṭimid Caliphate 144
*fikr* 116–118, 128, 138, 152, 157, 174, 181, 188, 203, 216, 235, 237–238, 241
Forcada, Miquel 160–161
form 20–21, 36–38, 42, 43, 50–52, 55, 58–64, 71–72, 75, 78, 83–84, 86, 98, 100–101, 136, 151, 154–155, 161–166, 168, 170, 173–175, 179, 204, 208–209, 216, 222, 228, 230–231, 235, 238, 240, 246–248

Galston, Miriam 142–143
Ġazālī, Abū Ḥāmid al- 19, 108, 145, 151, 168–173, 181, 183, 185–193, 195–196, 198–202, 205, 215–222, 231, 235, 240–243, 248–249, 253–254
Germann, Nadja 234
Gerson, Lloyd 22–23
God 72, 191, 196, 198, 200–201, 204–205, 209, 218–223, 231, 234–235, 240–243, 246, 249, 254
Good, the 24–25, 27–29, 30–32, 45–54, 80–82, 86–87, 105, 111, 114–115, 130, 135, 137, 140–141, 165, 195, 223
Goodman, Lenn E. 200–201
Gutas, Dimitri 107–108, 194, 239

happiness 127
Ḥaqq, al- 215, 222
Hayes, Josh 122–124
Ḥayy 184, 187, 195–197, 200–209, 211, 213–215, 218, 222–244, 248, 255
heart 206–209, 219, 222–223, 225–229, 237–238
heat, inborn 161–167, 181, 223–224, 230
heavenly bodies 78, 102, 104, 217–218
human activity 14–15, 127, 132, 134, 140, 142, 156–157, 161, 173–174, 181–182, 252

Ibn al-ʿArabī, Muḥyīddīn 193, 201n69, 242, 242n137
Ibn Barrağān 192
Ibn Gabirol 9, 68, 109, 144, 184
Ibn Masarra 144, 144n4, 192, 192n37
Ibn Tūmart 183, 191
Ibn Zuhr, Abūʾ l-ʿAlāʾ 146, 226n80
imagination 8, 14, 93–94, 113–114, 117–118, 120–121, 125–128, 148–152, 158–174, 178–179, 181, 189, 216–217, 220–221, 244, 247
imitation 42, 104–105, 200n64, 217–218
*see also* assimilation
indefiniteness 33, 36–37, 51, 55, 60–63
Indefinite Dyad 60–62
*see also* unlimitedness
intellect 28–35, 45–46, 49–54, 55–57, 60–68, 70–82, 85–98, 99–102, 107–108, 120–121, 124–125, 127–131, 137–138, 152, 147, 156–158, 161, 163, 167, 169–173, 175, 179–181
celestial 110, 128, 130–131, 141–142
intellection 33–35, 40–42, 53, 57, 62, 64–65, 67, 85, 98, 101–102, 106, 108, 113, 121, 125, 127, 131, 146, 167, 170, 173–175, 194, 204
Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn 115, 117, 119, 243

judgment 5–6, 11, 40–41, 41n67, 44, 54, 113, 127, 250, 255

knowledge 133, 153, 156, 159–160, 175, 180, 186–187, 194, 200–201, 204, 209, 211, 220–221, 225, 229, 232–234, 255
Kukkonen, Taneli 198, 204–205, 225, 233, 237

life 39–41, 46, 50–54, 57, 59–60, 67, 71–72, 74, 122–123, 127
logic 95, 108, 132–139, 145, 153–161, 187–190, 194–195
love 63–64, 76–77, 102–104, 129–131, 142, 148, 216, 218–219, 221–222
  *see also ʿišq*
  *see also* ἔρως
  *see also ḥubb*

Malti-Douglas, Fedwa 225
matter
  intelligible 37, 61–65
  material 43–44, 82–86, 96, 100–101, 136, 154–155, 238
models of desire
  Inherent 2–9, 11–13, 14, 83, 98, 110, 122, 139–143, 215, 222, 243–244, 245–246, 248–249, 251, 253
  Non-inherent 2–9, 13–14, 110, 114–115, 118, 125, 128, 131, 139–143, 146, 181–182, 210, 215, 217, 244, 245, 247
Moss, Jessica 7–8, 12, 140
mother 37, 64, 83, 200–201, 201n69, 203, 206–207, 222–227, 225n75, 233, 237, 241–243, 242n137, 248
motion 6–7, 9–10, 24, 27–28, 31, 36, 40, 44, 62, 98–99, 113–125, 127, 131, 134, 137, 147–149, 152, 156, 158–159, 161–167, 177–178, 182, 208, 216–218, 221, 230, 247, 251
multiplicity 49, 53, 61–62, 71, 94
mysticism 12, 67, 107–108, 192–193

Necessary Existent 203, 206, 212, 214–215, 223, 229, 235–236, 238–239, 248, 252
non-rational 28, 67, 86, 108, 246, 249, 251–252

One, the 34–35, 46–50, 70–72, 74, 76–77, 87, 97–98, 103, 107–108, 129, 240, 242, 246, 250

Pearson, Giles 9–10, 140
perfection 1–2, 10, 17, 33, 37, 50, 84, 96, 99–108, 132, 139, 145–146, 150–151, 156–161, 168, 170–171, 173, 175, 178–182, 212–215, 235–243
Plato 2, 23–24, 38, 82, 139–140, 184, 204
pneuma 119, 149
power
  active 150
  apprehending 17, 119, 121, 126–127, 134, 141, 175, 210–215, 222–223, 245
  desiderative 6, 14–16, 99, 114–125, 140, 217–218, 245, 250
  δύναμις 32–33, 48–50, 113, 122–125
  essential 147, 248
  irascible 103
  metaphorical 188–189, 214, 237
  potency 89, 181
  productive 45–46, 48–50
  psychological powers 103, 113–122, 125–128, 145–152, 162–168, 188–189, 216–218, 230–231, 235–244
  *quwwa* 105–106, 117, 120, 147, 149, 179, 189, 210, 216, 236
  rational 12–14, 16, 113, 127, 147, 152, 167, 169, 173, 179, 181, 248
  witnessing 203, 201, 214, 222, 235, 238–239, 241
purification 45, 54–57

Radtke, Bernd 193
rationality 5, 18, 23, 66, 70, 252
reason 8, 11–13, 15–17, 22, 24, 41–42, 46, 56, 59, 66, 107, 110, 113, 116–118, 121, 125–128, 138, 142–143, 146, 148–149, 152, 157, 162, 164–165, 167, 169, 178, 182, 203, 208, 225, 243–244, 245–249, 251–252
  practical 126–128, 132–134, 140, 251
  theoretical 126–128, 134, 251
reflection (*rawīya*) 128, 174, 219–220
relation 26–28, 151, 154, 156, 158, 161, 164–166, 172, 175, 177–178, 181–182
Richter-Bernburg, Lutz 226–228

secret 185–186, 191, 194, 205, 242
sensation 8, 14, 16, 42, 56, 85, 90–91, 93, 96, 113, 115, 117–118, 123–126, 128, 133, 136, 158, 160, 162, 167, 170–171, 173
sight 32–33, 51, 60–63, 65–67, 80, 90–91, 94–96, 106–107, 188–189, 211–214, 219–220, 222
*see also* vision
soul 35–40, 40–41, 51–52, 55–57, 60, 62–65, 75–76, 77–86, 87, 99–104, 146–152, 161–167, 204, 208–209, 214, 216, 218, 222, 225, 228–232, 235, 237, 239–240, 245–250, 254–255
animal 9, 13, 148, 208, 216, 230
lower 36, 55–57
rational 98, 180
striving 17, 146–151, 158, 160–161, 163, 165, 168, 172, 182, 247–248
universal 25, 64, 70, 78, 79, 87, 92–94
world 75
spirit 119, 163–165, 196, 207–208, 225, 230–232, 237
striving 122–124, 125–128, 134, 138, 141, 145–147, 244
Stroumsa, Sarah 146, 188
subject 11–15, 98, 114, 122, 129, 140, 142, 145, 153, 155, 157, 168, 174, 203, 210–211, 218, 225, 235–244, 245, 250, 253
substance 75–76, 78, 83, 89, 100, 102, 104, 122–125, 170, 181, 245–246
desiring substance 30–32, 48
Sufis 161, 168–173, 181, 189–193, 195, 204, 237, 239, 242, 244, 248

Themistius 9, 116, 145
theorizing (*naẓar*) 126–128, 153, 179, 187–189, 191, 221, 239
thinking 16, 27, 29–33, 35, 36, 52, 58, 62, 66–68, 91, 94, 109, 114, 117, 121, 166, 194–195, 236–238, 240
trace 31, 51–53, 54–57
Truth 11–15, 103, 108–109, 142, 160, 168–169, 171–172, 182, 184–188, 191, 194–195, 199, 201, 203, 205, 211, 214–215, 222–224, 229–230, 238, 240–241, 243–244, 246, 248, 251

Umayyad Caliphate 144
unity 20–21, 23, 43, 46, 49–50, 54–55, 62–63, 65–67, 74, 120, 124, 127, 168, 204–205, 228, 232, 239–240, 244, 246
unlimitedness 12–13, 24, 32–33, 55, 59–60, 63, 67
*see also* indefiniteness

Vasilakis, Dimitri 37–38
vice 40, 111
virtue 54–57, 88–89, 92–96, 141, 146, 173, 176–179, 246, 248
vision 32–33, 37, 41, 56–57, 63, 65, 71–72, 74, 88, 91, 94–95, 99, 104, 106–108, 212–213, 219–220, 255
*see also* sight

will 125–128, 133–135, 160, 176, 181
Wiitala, Michael Oliver 23
Wirmer, David 127, 127n49, 135, 139, 146–147, 153, 155–156, 166, 172, 175, 178–179, 204, 234, 251
witnessing (*mušāhada*) 106–108, 170, 186–188, 194, 203, 210, 214, 219, 220, 222, 228–229, 230, 234–236, 238–241, 243, 248–249
wonder 168–170, 172, 208, 231, 234, 236
worlds
intelligible world 36, 51, 55–56, 60–61, 64n139, 65, 74, 79, 81n26, 85, 87–88, 91, 93–94, 101, 233, 235–237
sensible world 75–76, 85, 87–91, 99–102, 237
spiritual world 230
two worlds 61, 81n27, 85, 87–95, 118, 118n22
*see also* soul, world

Zaragoza 144, 169